



Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter One

January, 1998 • Newsletter • Number 5, Vol. 1

From the Desk of John Bergeron, President

At our Jan. meeting we were unable to use our room because we got flooded out. Due to all the rain we received some of it managed to find its way into the lower levels of the VFW. Hopefully all will be dry by the time February rolls around.

What are VVA #1 goals for the upcoming year was our main focus. If we are going to conduct fundraising events we need to have a purpose. The consensus was that we get the "youths" in the area involved with the Memorial Project, i.e. an essay contest in the schools was recommended for example.

We also need to get involved with the youth in our communities. Some of the members present were given homework. Their assignment is to contact some of the area schools and find out what is being taught about the Vietnam War. Hopefully we will have some local educators at our February meeting.

One idea was to supply the schools with various texts and have teams of people going to classrooms.

We need feedback on this matter. So if any of you are interested, please get in touch.

It's that time of year again when most of us need to renew our membership. I realize that there are many of you that for obvious reasons can't attend the monthly meetings. By renewing your membership you will support us financially. \$9.00 of the \$20.00 stays with the chapter and we certainly could use that money to accomplish some of our goals. Our monthly expenses are usually minimal. They consist of \$50.00-\$60.00 for postage to mail our newsletters. CVPS still prints the newsletter at no cost. When warmer months arrive and we become more active we may incur more expenses.

We currently have \$519.00 in our checking account.

We have lost our one source of income. We have, or I should say, we did have Rip-Off Tickets at the Center Street Saloon, but it appears as if they have gone out of business.

So your renewal will certainly be appreciated. When you

get your newsletter, cut out the membership form and give it to some one you know and maybe they would like to join VVA#1, the first chapter in the nation.

Thank You.

John

Memorial Update

On January 6, 1998 we met with the architect, Bob Parker, Ernie Smalley of Smalley Contractors and Michael of Greenscreen Graphics. We focused on a final design. We made a few small changes. Our goal is to keep it as simple as possible, very low maintenance, which I think we accomplished at this meeting.

A final drawing will be available for viewing at our next meeting on February 7th. We will have our membership vote on the design we have selected.

We have raised approximately \$14,000 and have \$12,000 to spend on the Memorial. This should be enough to complete our goal.

Ernie Smalley has given us a preliminary time schedule and if all goes according to plan, we will have a dedication on Memorial Day.

VA Enrollment Push

The VA is encouraging all vets to enroll at the VA. Even if you have no present needs or are not applying for benefits, it is worthwhile to enroll and be on the books in case some time in the future you need VA services. Copies of the enrollment form can be obtained at the DET, or you can call the toll-free telephone line, (800) 827-1000, and ask that the forms be mailed to you.

On a side note, did you know that vets with as little as 10% service connected disability are eligible for eye exams and glasses, as well as hearing aids, check it out!

VVA Chapter #1 Wishes to Thank the CVPS Shareholder Community Program and especially Mr. Hughes for the printing of the newsletter.

It is our policy to provide an open forum to all. Therefore, the articles, letters and ads contained herein do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of VVA #1 or VVA National.

February Meeting: Involving Local Youth

Next meeting will be held on Sat., Feb. 7, 1998 at the VFW in Rutland, located on Wales Street. The general meeting will begin at 6:00 P.M. Following the meeting we will have a discussion with local educators on how to get some of the area youth involved with the Memorial Dedication and "teaching about the Vietnam War" in the classroom. If you are interested and would like to participate you are welcome to attend.



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Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter One

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Downtown Has Sole Shoe Repair

Visit our new expanded store • All repairs done on premises • Carrying a large line of shoe care products
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Military Pins, Patches, Stickers, Buckles, etc.*

**We Honor Our Vets
10% Discount on all repairs**

**John Bergeron
Owner**

**13 Center Street, Rutland, VT
Mon.-Fri. 8:30-5:30, Sat. 8:00-Noon**

For a Vacation That's a Real Blast, How About Launching A Grenade?

Taken from *The Wall Street Journal*, January 13, 1998
By Pichayaporn Utumporn
Staff Reporter of *The Wall Street Journal*



PHNOM PENH - The only privately owned firing range in Cambodia is shooting for a tourist boom.

For just \$20 a pop, vacationers can try out a grenade launcher. It costs even less to rent an M-16, Ruger, Smith & Wesson,

Makarov K59, Tokarev K54, Glock, Beretta, .357 Magnum, Uzi or AK-47.

"We want to bring out a little boy in everybody," says Victor Chao, the managing director and part owner of the club, which opened on Christmas Eve.

The Marksman Club is only a few minutes from the genocide memorial of Choeung Ek, the "Killing Fields" where Khmer Rouge commanders executed their Cambodian prisoners in the 1970s. From the outside, it looks like a military encampment. Towering fences are capped with barbed wire. A tank aims its barrel squarely through the entranceway.

The grounds feature a T-54 tank, which Mr. Chao said was left by Russian troops during the Vietnam War, and an M-42 antiaircraft tank used by Americans. He's awaiting the delivery of a Russian MiG-21 jet fighter and a US helicopter promised him by Cambodia's air force. The vehicles will make "a very symbolic display of foreign influence in Cambodia," he says.

Setting up the club wasn't easy, Mr. Chao says, given Cambodia's violent history. To clear away objections, he has promised to share profits with the government, hire 250 Cambodians for the construction and operation, build a school and a hospital and provide the community with electricity and water.

So far, Mr. Chao says the investment has cost him and his senior partner, and Indonesian-Chinese businessman, \$880,000. Whether it will turn a profit remains to be seen. Sporadic fighting since a July coup has been scaring away tourist, and the slump in Southeast Asian economies has prompted those remaining to spend less. "Everybody is cutting down on the luxury of their lives," Mr. Chao notes.

Spending \$20 for a personal experience with a grenade launcher may not seem unreasonable, but prices can

escalate with rapid-firing weapons. Employees warn customers not to be trigger-happy with the machine guns. "The bill can easily go up to 30 bucks for keeping your finger on the trigger for three seconds," Mr. Chao says, because of the per bullet cost. "Sometimes people cry when they see the bill," he says.

Low Cost Medical Insurance

Unemployed or underemployed vets may now be eligible for low cost health insurance! The Vermont Health Access Plan (VHAP) is basically for people without any medical insurance who meet low income requirements. The cost is \$0 - \$15.00 for six months, depending on your income. There is also a charge of \$2.00 per doctor visit or \$3.00 for outpatient services at a hospital. If you receive treatment in a hospital emergency room, the charge is \$25.00.

Call (800) 250-8427 for more information and requirements.

20 Year Anniversary

Reprinted from the VVA Hotline, Dec. 9, 1997

February 1998 marks the 20th anniversary of the founding of Vietnam Veterans of America. It began when a group of 15 Vietnam vets, headed by Robert (Bobby) Muller, opened up a small office in Washington, calling themselves the Vietnam Veterans Coalition, Inc. Within a year, the group renamed itself Vietnam Veterans of America and changed from a lobbying group to a membership organization. The rest, as they say, is history. Look for an article in the December-January VVA Veteran commemorating VVA's February 1978 founding.

Sympathy Extended

Our deepest sympathies go out to the family of Kenneth Shakan, who recently passed away at the young age of 55. He was the owner of Leather Fashions. They are members of Honor the Vet Program.

We also received word that due to the death of the owner, Bob's Hunting and Fishing, in Chittenden has closed. Our belated sympathies to the family.

No One Died In Vain

The Wall Street Journal, 23 May, 1997

By Ken Mulholland

The Cold War lasted about 40 years and fortunately for mankind it never turned officially hot. World War III and the nuclear holocaust didn't happen. But for thousands of American soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen that were killed in action during those tense years the Cold War was very hot. It is to those thousands that we as a nation must say: "You did not die in vain." If they had not stood in that gap between freedom and the slavery of communism, the other side (mainly the Soviet Union) could have miscalculated our resolve.

World War II may someday happen, God forbid. But it could have begun anytime from the late 1940s up until the late 1980s. Time and time again we were pushed almost to the brink from the Berlin Airlift, to Korea, Check Point Charlie, Cuba, Vietnam, Central America, Grenada and scores of other flash points. And each time, Americans put their lives in harm's way.

If the Soviet Union had ever miscalculated in Europe and made a military thrust toward our outnumbered troops the unthinkable may have started. Tactical nuclear weapons were ready and aimed. The Soviets did not make a military move on us or on our NATO allies because they knew very well we would fight, as we had proved so often during the Cold War in faraway places.

Despite this record, some historians do not record America's Cold War sacrifice in a way that makes us proud. They view our role in Vietnam as significant only to the degree that it created unrest at home and a negative impact on the lives of those it affected in Southeast Asia.

They've got it dead wrong. Our involvement in places like Korea and Vietnam should be recorded as the most honorable and unselfish sacrifice any great power has ever undertaken. We were not after real estate, natural resources, the subjugation of a people or anything else other than honoring our commitments and stopping a Red tide that had already engulfed so much of the world. People who escaped from the communist regimes in Vietnam, Laos and, of course, Cambodia have testified with extraordinary eloquence about the hellish conditions that were every bit as horrifying - and more so - than the warnings of those derided by the press as "Cold War Hawks." Still, historians are wont to limit the testimony of the survivors of communist tyranny and give

more space to the analysis of people who were childishly naive about the communist threat at the time of the Vietnam War and who still wish to record that engagement as a dark and grim period for America.

Apologists for communist aggression will scream that to view America's involvement in Vietnam as a noble undertaking is not only politically incorrect but historically illiterate. But imagine if Presidents Kennedy or Johnson had brought the war to a successful conclusion by 1962-66. In such a case, there would have been very little

negative press on Vietnam. Almost all of the negative remarks on the war come from the fact that it was allowed to go on so long. If that's the case, criticism of the war should be directed only at the political restraints put on our military not to see the war through to a successful conclusion and not against our right to be in Vietnam or the tactical-strategic performance of our military. In light of all the evidence that has come out about the evil we were fighting against - in Vietnam and in the global march of communism in general - it should be quite clear that the war itself was a noble effort.

There are those that say all war is wrong. I do agree that all war is a horrible and frightening experience. The people who fight wars know this better than anyone else. But fighting a war is not as bad as submitting to the hell of living in a world dominated by fascism or communism. And the decision to go to war cannot always be based on something as clear cut as the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

America, the leader of the free world, has and may still have to fight small wars to prevent large wars. But the sacrifice of those who die in the small wars is no less important to the survival of a free world than the deaths of those who die in a "big" one. Let us particularly remember those who died in the named and unnamed battles of the Cold War. They made the supreme sacrifice for a cause every bit as just as the ones fought for at Valley Forge, Gettysburg and Omaha Beach.

Mr. Mulholland is a manager for an engineering company in Tampa, Fla. He was with Company A, 25th Aviation Bn., 25th Infantry Div., South Vietnam 1967-68.

Ed. Note: The preceding article was submitted by a fellow VVA #1 member, Barry Speare, for his friend Ken Mulholland. Although it originally appeared for Memorial Day, the message is worth reading any day of the year. Thank you, Barry, for sharing this with us.



Honor the Vet Program

The current participants of the Honor the Vet Program are listed below with their addresses, phone numbers and discounts.

BUSINESS

1. **Northeast Army Navy Surplus**
Rt. 7 North, Rutland, 773-7322
2. **Downtown Has Sole Shoe Repair**
13 Center St., Rutland
3. **Adirondack Tire Merchants**
Strong Ave., Rutland, 775-1944
4. **Army Navy Store**
Center St., Rutland, 773-8839
5. **Ron's Sunoco**
Woodstock Ave., Rutland, 773-2790
6. **Sal's Restaurant**
West St., Rutland, 775-3360
7. **Howard's Sunoco**
S. Main St., Rutland, 775-7911
8. **Boss Threads**
Diamond Run Mall, Rutland
9. **Michael's Handmade Wooden Toys**
Center St., Rutland, 773-1488
10. **Buxton's Sunoco**
N. Main St., Rutland, 773-9747
11. **Greg Barsanti, C.P.A.**
Merchants Row, Rutland, 773-4038
12. **Two By Two**-Handmade wooden jewelry
Pittsford, 483-6121
13. **Boise's Electrical Service**
Rutland, 747-4481
14. **Battery Street Jeans**
Merchants Row, Rutland, 773-6445
15. **Leather Fashions, Inc.** Disc. *plus* they pay the tax!
Merchants Row, Rutland, 775-3099
16. **Lemon Rentals** 12% on car or van rentals
Rt. 4, W. Rutland, 800-639-6460

DISCOUNT

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|-----|
| 1. Northeast Army Navy Surplus | 10% | 17. McNeil & Reedy, Inc. | 10% |
| Rt. 7 North, Rutland, 773-7322 | | Merchants Row, Rutland, 773-7760 | |
| 2. Downtown Has Sole Shoe Repair | 10% | 18. Back Home Cafe/Clem's Kitchen 20% off food items | |
| 13 Center St., Rutland | | 21 Center St., Rutland, 775-9313 | |
| 3. Adirondack Tire Merchants | 10-20% | 19. Eastman's 10% (custom framing not included) | |
| Strong Ave., Rutland, 775-1944 | | 66-70 Merchant's Row, Rutland | |
| 4. Army Navy Store | 10% | 20. Ole Time Watch and Jewelry Repair | 10% |
| Center St., Rutland, 773-8839 | | 3 Strong's Ave., Rutland, VT | |
| 5. Ron's Sunoco | 5% | 21. A & J Auto Parts 10% (except on sale items) | |
| Woodstock Ave., Rutland, 773-2790 | | 176 West St., Rutland, 775-5584 | |
| 6. Sal's Restaurant | 10% | 22. Classic Stitching , Computerized Embroidery | 10% |
| West St., Rutland, 775-3360 | | 185 Main St., Vergennes, 877-3659 | |
| 7. Howard's Sunoco | 10% | 23. Pasqually's | 10% |
| S. Main St., Rutland, 775-7911 | | 162 N. Main St., Rutland, 775-7040 | |
| 8. Boss Threads | 10-20% | 24. Paul's Family Restaurant 10%, eat-in or take-out | |
| Diamond Run Mall, Rutland | | Jct. Rts 7 & 140, Wallingford, 446-2150 | |
| 9. Michael's Handmade Wooden Toys | 10-20% | 25. Sevigny's Hunting & Fishing | 10% |
| Center St., Rutland, 773-1488 | | 236 Main St., W. Rutland, 438-2977 | |
| 10. Buxton's Sunoco | 5% off labor & parts | 26. Freeman Jewelers | 10% |
| N. Main St., Rutland, 773-9747 | | 76 Merchants Row, 773-2792 | |
| 11. Greg Barsanti, C.P.A. | 20% | 27. Jake's Light Trucking | 10% |
| Merchants Row, Rutland, 773-4038 | | W. Rutland, 438-5188 | |
| 12. Two By Two -Handmade wooden jewelry | 10% | 28. Big Daddy's Used Cars 5% on truck accessories | |
| Pittsford, 483-6121 | | Center Rutland, 438-2558 | |
| 13. Boise's Electrical Service | 10% | 29. Rutland Optical 10% off complete pair of glasses | |
| Rutland, 747-4481 | | 28 Center St., Rutland, 775-0121 | |
| 14. Battery Street Jeans | 10% | 30. Paradee & Associates 20% off all services | |
| Merchants Row, Rutland, 773-6445 | | Legal Investigations, Burlington, 860-6100 | |
| 15. Leather Fashions, Inc. Disc. <i>plus</i> they pay the tax! | | | |
| Merchants Row, Rutland, 775-3099 | | | |
| 16. Lemon Rentals 12% on car or van rentals | | | |
| Rt. 4, W. Rutland, 800-639-6460 | | | |

17. **McNeil & Reedy, Inc.**
18. **Back Home Cafe/Clem's Kitchen** 20% off food items
19. **Eastman's** 10% (custom framing not included)
20. **Ole Time Watch and Jewelry Repair**
21. **A & J Auto Parts** 10% (except on sale items)
22. **Classic Stitching**, Computerized Embroidery
23. **Pasqually's**
24. **Paul's Family Restaurant** 10%, eat-in or take-out
25. **Sevigny's Hunting & Fishing**
26. **Freeman Jewelers**
27. **Jake's Light Trucking**
28. **Big Daddy's Used Cars** 5% on truck accessories
29. **Rutland Optical** 10% off complete pair of glasses
30. **Paradee & Associates** 20% off all services

Thanks to all these establishments for believing in the veteran! Show your membership card from any veteran's organization (or other proof of service) to obtain your discount at any of these places!

Do you know of a business who might like to participate in The Honor The Vet Program? Contact Tom Reardon at 518-499-2488 to have a representative visit the business & explain the program.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, CHAPTER ONE

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership in Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter one is open to all Vietnam Era Veterans. Associate Membership is open to family members, friends, and concerned citizens. Return this form with \$20 annual membership dues and a copy of your DD-214 (if applicable) to:
Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter One, PO Box 6301, Rutland, VT 05702. Upon receipt of your dues, Chapter One will issue a temporary membership card like the one below. This will serve as your authorized membership card until you receive one from National.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

_____ Vietnam Era _____ New _____ Renewal

_____ Associate _____ New _____ Renewal



Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter One - 1998

This is to certify that

John Doe

is a member in good standing of the
Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #1
Sgt. Pepper

Membership Committee Chairman
Temporary Membership Card

U.S.O. SHOW

WANTED!!

Anyone with the ability to sing, dance, act, direct, paint sets or any related talents to take part in a USO show to be held on Veterans Day, 1998.

Please contact me if you would be interested in organizing such an event. Call 773-2815 as soon as possible. A friend of mine would like to direct a USO show to benefit VVA #1.

She has an extensive music background & has produced and directed many musicals in the area.

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter One
P.O. Box 6301
Rutland, VT 05702
Please Forward



Enjoy Winter In Vermont!

"Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #1 will assist Vietnam Era Veterans, their families & others in the enhancement of their life experience through intervention and social interaction."

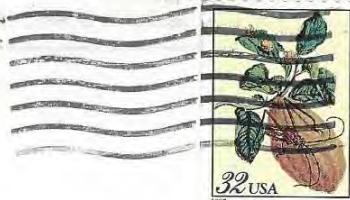
Veteran Discounts

Several drug stores in the Rutland area offer discounts on prescriptions to veterans. Show your American Legion Membership card at CVS, Osco or Brooks and save money! It's a good idea to check with other stores to see if they offer discounts.

Some Still
Wait!

Articles & Ads for the
Newsletter may be mailed
directly to the editor:

Beth Higgins
RD 1 Box 88A
Castleton, VT 05735
Deadline: First Saturday of the month



Bill & Beth Higgins
RD #1 Box 88A
Castleton, VT 05735



Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter One

February, 1998 • Newsletter • Number 5, Vol. 2

From the Desk of John Bergeron, President

Our Educational Outreach Program has been given a substantial boost. David Wolk, the Superintendent of Schools for Rutland City, has contacted VVA #1 and is interested in our program. Mr. Wolk will become an asset to us by the mere fact that he has numerous contacts throughout Rutland County & the state. The obvious, of course, will be the in roads to all the schools in the city.

On Tuesday, February 24 we met with him. The meeting was held at my store. More information on this next issue.

In conjunction with the Outreach program, we need to organize teams of people to go into the schools. We will need the following: Vietnam Vets - combat & support; nurses; spouses of vets; parents; war protesters; anyone who has some connection to this period.

Usually the panel of people that go into the schools will be involved with a question and answer session.

Again, please contact me at 773-2815. If you are interested send a short bio of yourself & your connection to the war. Also if you have any suggested reading material, please let me know.

VFW Post 648, Rutland is seeking new members. They would like to see Vietnam Veterans enter their ranks. Applications may be picked up at the VFW on Wales Street in Rutland.

Next meeting will be held at 6:00 pm at the VFW on Wales Street in Rutland. **MARCH 7th**

Note of importance: because the Regional 1 Conference will be held the weekend of our monthly meeting, it will be rescheduled for the 11th at 6:00 pm. **APRIL 11th**
Thank You. **John**

**Submit your articles to the Newsletter;
We want to hear from you!
Deadline - first Saturday of each month.**

Highlights of February 7 Meeting

Chapter 1 has approved the final design for the Rutland Vietnam Veterans Memorial, featuring shrubbery, marble benches, a large marble relief sculpture of a soldier and a single flagpole.

To establish an "educational outreach" program for greater understanding of the Vietnam War, Chapter 1 will create a committee to look into such activities as an essay contest among school children and other programs for schools.

The State Council of VVA is proposing that a summer picnic at the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington to replace Vietnam Era Veterans Recognition Day. Chapter 1 will formally consider the proposal after obtaining more information.

Membership Notes

MEMBERSHIP! MEMBERSHIP! MEMBERSHIP!
By the time you read this your membership dues will be due. Membership year ends 2-28-98. Many have already renewed. Please dig out those renewal notices and submit them. Consider a 3 year membership to reduce the need to submit every year. Better yet, consider a Life membership! Your membership is the lifeblood of our organization. Current Chapter 1 membership is 143 members.

Dick Doyle, Membership Chairman

Nominations Being Accepted for VVA Vermont State Council

Elections for State Council officers will be held in June 1998. Nominations are now open for all positions: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

The Successful Future of the Vermont State Council Depends on Your Participation!

Nominations may be submitted to: Robert L. Buck, PO Box 185, Bennington, VT 05201; Ph. (802) 442-9353, Fax (802) 442-1377, e-mail bbuck@sover.net. All submissions are due no later than April 1, 1998.

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~~APRIL~~ Meeting Rescheduled

Important Note:

Because the Region 1 Conference will be held the weekend of our monthly meeting, it has been rescheduled for ~~APRIL~~ March 11th, at 6:00 PM. The meeting will be held at the VFW on Wales St. in Rutland, VT.

We have many 'irons in the fire' and could use your input, why not join us for the meeting?



Freedom Forge
Ornamental Ironwork
Blissville, Vermont

Jon Pintello
PO Box 83 • Bomoseen, VT 05732
(802) 265-8602 • (888) 286-8407

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4. Army Navy Store Center St., Rutland, 773-8839	10%	20. Ole Time Watch and Jewelry Repair 10% 3 Strongs Ave., Rutland, VT
5. Ron's Sunoco Woodstock Ave., Rutland, 773-2790	5%	21. A & J Auto Parts 10% (except on sale items) 176 West St., Rutland, 775-5584
6. Sal's Restaurant West St., Rutland, 775-3360	10%	22. Classic Stitching , Computerized Embroidery 10% 185 Main St., Vergennes, 877-3659
7. Howard's Sunoco S. Main St., Rutland, 775-7911	10%	23. Pasqually's 10% 162 N. Main St., Rutland, 775-7040
8. Boss Threads Diamond Run Mall, Rutland	10-20%	24. Paul's Family Restaurant 10%, eat-in or take-out Jct. Rts 7 & 140, Wallingford, 446-2150
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Vietnam Veterans of America, CHAPTER ONE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership in Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter one is open to all Vietnam Era Veterans. Associate Membership is open to family members, friends, and concerned citizens. Return this form with \$20 annual membership dues and a copy of your DD-214 (if applicable) to:
Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter One, PO Box 6301, Rutland, VT 05702. Upon receipt of your dues, Chapter One will issue a temporary membership card like the one below. This will serve as your authorized membership card until you receive one from National.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

_____ Vietnam Era _____ New _____ Renewal

_____ Associate _____ New _____ Renewal



Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter One - 1998

This is to certify that

John Doe

is a member in good standing of the
Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #1
Sgt. Pepper

Membership Committee Chairman
Temporary Membership Card

ROLLING THUNDER® XI

RISE FOR FREEDOM



POW-MIA
“WE WILL NEVER FORGET”

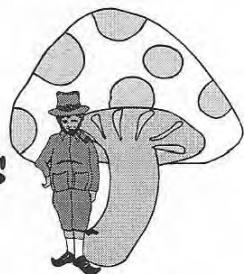
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C/O ARTIE MULLER
NATIONAL CHAPTER 1
PO BOX 216
NESHANIC STA, NJ 08853
908-369-5439

WASHINGTON, D.C.
MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND
MAY 24, 1998

WWI 3,350
WWII 78,767
KOREA 8,172
VIETNAM 2078
PERSIAN GULF 41

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter One
P.O. Box 6301
Rutland, VT 05702
Please Forward

Happy
St. Patrick's
Day!



"Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #1 will assist Vietnam Era Veterans, their families & others in the enhancement of their life experience through intervention and social interaction."



Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter One

March, 1998 • Newsletter • Number 5, Vol. 3

From the Desk of John Bergeron, President

The next meeting will be held on Saturday, April 11, 1998 at 6:00 pm, at the VFW Rutland.

Region 1 Conference will be held April 4, 1998 at the American Legion in Bennington, VT. A tentative agenda follows.

Saturday, April 4th

8:00 am	Chaplains Meeting
8:00 am	Associate Liaisons Meeting
9:00 am	Conference Opening
	Opening Ceremonies
	Posting of the Colors
	Invocation: Father Phil
	Opening remarks Vermont State
	Council President John Miner
	George Duggins President, VVA
	Ernie DiRocco Director Region 1,
	Rhode Island State Council President
	Regional Goals Report
	Vietnam Veterans of America
	20th Anniversary Proposal
	Richard Levesque - Veterans Benefits
11:30-12:00	Vermont State Council President
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch sponsored by Vermont State
	Council and VVA #601
2:15	Trip to Vermont State Veterans Home

Return From Home:

Steve Bramham, Wes Guidry, Mookie Porter -
Media Relations & Bennington College Report

Saturday Evening - Party Time!

Dance to the music of the Vietnam Era.

Sunday, April 5

9:00	Remaining business and/or
	award presentations

For those of you who are new to VVA, Region 1 is made up of all the New England states and there should be members present from throughout our area. This conference is open to all. This would be a good opportunity to speak your mind to

It is our policy to provide an open forum to all. Therefore, the articles, letters and ads contained herein do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of VVA #1 or VVA National.

the powers from Washington, DC.

Once again I have to announce to our membership the unfortunate death of one of our members.

Eugene F. Shepard

FOREST DALE - The funeral service for Eugene Francis Shepard, 63, who died Saturday at his home, was held at 10 am Tuesday, at Miller and Ketcham Funeral Home in Brandon.

Deborah Perrigo, pastor of Brandon United Methodist Church officiated. Entombment followed in Pine Hill Cemetery. A private graveside committal service with military honors will take place at a later date in Forest Dale Cemetery.

He was born July 5, 1934, in Rutland, the son of Spencer E. and Ruby Olive (Parker) Shepard.

He received his early education in Leicester schools and attended Brandon High School.

He married Faie Snow Shepard in Pittsford on Nov. 5, 1956.

He served in the United States Army from 1957 until 1959. He was stationed with the 15th Engineer Battalion Infantry Division in Fort Carson, Colo. Following his honorable discharge in 1959, he returned to Vermont and a career as a carpenter. In earlier years, he had worked for various builders including Naylor and Breen, Alfred Packer and Bill Delong. He retired after more than 30 years as a builder.

Mr. Shepard was an avid sportsman and loved hunting and fishing.

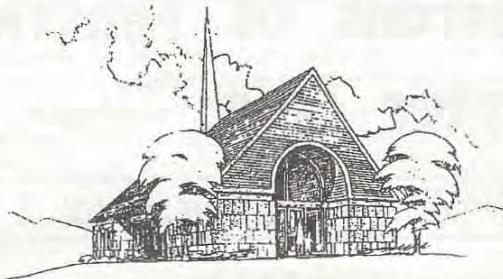
Survivors include his wife of Forest Dale; two daughters, Cathleen L. Thompson of Naples, Fla., and Kelly A. Shepard of Hampton, NY; a brother, Robert A. Shepard of Brandon; two sisters, Shirley Denton and Charlotte Johnson, both of Brandon; two grandsons; several nieces, nephews and cousins.

He was predeceased by a son, Patrick S. Shepard in 1981, a brother, Harold Shepard and two sisters, Helen Newton and Beverly Fisher.

Following the funeral service the family received friends at a reception at the Neshobe Sportsman Club in Brandon.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Lupus Foundation of America, Vermont Chapter, 65 South Main St., Montpelier, 05676, or to the American Heart Association, PO Box 130, Shelburne, VT 05482.

The Miller and Ketchum Funeral Home of Brandon was in
Continued on page 2



*The Proposed Chapel at
Vermont Veterans Memorial Cemetery
Randolph, Vermont*

For the past three years our group has been raising funds to assist in the building of a chapel at the Vermont Veterans Memorial Cemetery. We were tasked by the Adjutant General to raise \$125,000.

To date we have raised just over \$116,000. We would like to reach our goal before Memorial Day. On that day we will be having a ground-breaking ceremony for the chapel at the cemetery.

If you would like to make a contribution, please send it to: Vermont Veterans Memorial Cemetery Chapel, Inc., PO Box 2363, South Burlington, VT 05407.

President's Message, Continued

charge of arrangements.

Our deepest condolences go to Faie Shepard and her family at their loss.

Faie and Eugene have been members for the past few years.

A card of note from any of our members would be greatly appreciated by the family, I'm sure.

For those of you who may not know it, VVA #1 carries a line of military items.

For example: Unit pins & patches, belt buckles, etc.

We also have VVA #1 hats for members, \$12.50 includes your name embroidered on the back. VVA #1 T-shirts are also available.

Chances are if we don't have it we will be able to order it.

For information call John Bergeron at 802-773-2815.

You are able to support VVA #1 by purchasing these items through us.

You may notice that there are no ads in this issue. They have been omitted because no one has been paying for them. As you know, ads are sold to offset the cost of mailing the newsletter. The Chapter needs you to do your part in this.

Don't forget that elections will be held for the Chapter on April 11, 1998. Come support your favorite candidate!!

John

VVA Chapter #1 Wishes to Thank the CVPS Shareholder Community Program and especially Mr. Hughes for the printing of the newsletter.

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter One Officers and Board of Directors

Officers

President - John Bergeron - (802) 773-2815
Vice President - Steve Faye - (802) 773-7305
Secretary - Jack Crowther
Treasurer - Jon Pintello - (802) 265-8602

Board Members

**Dick Doyle - (802) 885-2167 - Work -
e-mail - rdoyle@pop.det.state.vt.us**
Bill Whitney - (802) 875-2640
Stanley Dulski
Andy Moschetto - (802) 483-2530

Associate Liaison

RoseMary Valentine - (802) 447-0373

Highlights of March 7 Meeting

About 15 members attended - good turnout. We now have 144 members.

The chapter has received some nice shows of support. The Rutland City GOP committee, headed by Gregory Thayer, has included us in plans for a dinner and school choice debate March 23 at the Palms Restaurant. Of the \$20 price for the event, \$5 will go to the VVA Ch. 1 and we've been invited to sell 50-50 tickets and memorabilia at the event as well.

Rutland City School Superintendent David Wolk has responded enthusiastically to a proposal for an educational outreach program on the Vietnam War. He has offered to arrange a meeting with teachers and school board members and is prepared to have the school system purchase materials to support the program.

Meanwhile Chapter 1 is working on designing an essay contest or similar event in connection with the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, still planned for Memorial Day of this year.

Elections for Chapter 1 officers for the coming year will be held at the April 11 meeting.

Honor the Vet Program

The current participants of the Honor the Vet Program are listed below with their addresses, phone numbers and discounts.

<u>BUSINESS</u>	<u>DISCOUNT</u>
1. Northeast Army Navy Surplus Rt. 7 North, Rutland, 773-7322	10%
2. Downtown Has Sole Shoe Repair 13 Center St., Rutland	10%
3. Adirondack Tire Merchants Strong Ave., Rutland, 775-1944	10-20%
4. Army Navy Store Center St., Rutland, 773-8839	10%
5. Sal's Restaurant West St., Rutland, 775-3360	10%
7. Howard's Sunoco S. Main St., Rutland, 775-7911	10%
8. Michael's Handmade Wooden Toys Center St., Rutland, 773-1488	10-20%
9. Buxton's Sunoco N. Main St., Rutland, 773-9747	5% off labor & parts
10. Greg Barsanti, C.P.A. Merchants Row, Rutland, 773-4038	20%
11. Two By Two-Handmade wooden jewelry Pittsford, 483-6121	10%
12. Boise's Electrical Service Rutland, 747-4481	10%
13. Battery Street Jeans Merchants Row, Rutland, 773-6445	10%
14. Leather Fashions, Inc. Disc. <u>plus</u> they pay the tax! Merchants Row, Rutland, 775-3099	
15. Lemon Rentals Rt. 4, W. Rutland, 800-639-6460	12% on car or van rentals
16. McNeil & Reedy, Inc. Merchants Row, Rutland, 773-7760	10%

17. Back Home Cafe/Clem's Kitchen 20% off food items
21 Center St., Rutland, 775-9313
18. Eastman's 10% (custom framing not included)
66-70 Merchant's Row, Rutland
19. Ole Time Watch and Jewelry Repair 10%
3 Strongs Ave., Rutland, VT
20. A & J Auto Parts 10% (except on sale items)
176 West St., Rutland, 775-5584
21. Classic Stitching, Computerized Embroidery 10%
185 Main St., Vergennes, 877-3659
22. Pasqually's 10%
162 N. Main St., Rutland, 775-7040
23. Sevigny's Hunting & Fishing 10%
236 Main St., W. Rutland, 438-2977
24. Freeman Jewelers 10%
76 Merchants Row, 773-2792
25. Jake's Light Trucking 10%
W. Rutland, 438-5188
26. Big Daddy's Used Cars 5% on truck accessories
Center Rutland, 438-2558
27. Rutland Optical 10% off complete pair of glasses
28 Center St., Rutland, 775-0121
28. Paradee & Associates 20% off all services
Legal Investigations, Burlington, 860-6100

Thanks to all these establishments for believing in the veteran! Show your membership card from any veteran's organization (or other proof of service) to obtain your discount at any of these places!

Do you know of a business who might like to participate in The Honor The Vet Program? Contact Tom Reardon at 518-499-2488 to have a representative visit the business & explain the program.

Vietnam Veterans of America,

CHAPTER ONE

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Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

_____ Vietnam Era _____ New _____ Renewal

_____ Associate _____ New _____ Renewal



Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter One - 1998

This is to certify that

John Doe

*is a member in good standing of the
Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #1*

Sgt. Pepper

**Membership Committee Chairman
Temporary Membership Card**

Soldier's Medal

by John Paul Wagner

On February 16, 1998, John Wagner quietly died, while his oldest son John and youngest daughter, Miriam, stood watch, while hospitalized at the Fletcher Allen Medical Center, Burlington Vermont.

John Wagner was a resident of North Clarendon, Rutland, then Bennington, Vermont. Three sons and two daughters: John Paul Wagner of Rutland, VT; Stephen Wagner, B.C. Canada; Rosemary Wagner-Taddeo of Florida; Miriam Wagner of New York City; Peter Wagner of Colorado shall all miss him.

Born on June 14, 1922, Camille John Wagner led an eventful life. One morning, on his way to school, he was seen pushing a small child, a first grader, out of the path of a speeding automobile thus saving the girl's life. From the result of this rescue, a new traffic light was installed right in front of that public elementary school building. That was the early 1930s.

John Wagner had detailed memories serving aboard the USAMP General Ord, a minelayer, during 1943. It was the burning fuel barge that was servicing the General Ord where he had burned both of his hands rescuing two men. He was awarded the Soldier's Medal for this heroism that did not involve enemy action.

John Wagner was not a professional soldier. In fact, he had seen in the guard house being punished for some breach of military discipline, had to be marched out under armed escort to the parade ground to be decorated, then had to be marched back to the guard house.

John Wagner had been a NRA Master. He was the kind of marksman that hated to kill, shot the perfect score, putting little holes in paper targets at absurd distances. He was the kind of soldier who cried real tears when the Army took away his 1903 Springfield, then added insult to injury by replacing it with the M1 Garand rifle. Only a real rifleman would understand this.

As a small boy pinning on my father's ribbons and medals while playing

soldier, I remember getting scolded by my mother for this misadventure. It was not until many years later did I find out about the Soldier's Medal.

The second rescue came in the early 1960s aboard another burning ship, this time, in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. That was the USS Constellation, an aircraft carrier. Fire aboard ship scares any sailor. Water must be pumped out faster than put down to smother the flames. Tight spaces, voids, men trapped, deadly fumes, burning jet fuel, smoke, flames, heat are only some of the hazards encountered. John Wagner, nick named Whitey, had gone back on the burning carrier, for the third time, with either an exhausted Oxygen Breathing Apparatus canister or had exhausted a fresh one while attempting to rescue two more men. New York City Fire Department rescued him, this time, since he awoke in the hospital a few days later. Channel 4, in New York, covered the great Brooklyn Navy Yard fire. Seeing my father on television during the evening news carrying a stretcher was indeed traumatic.

As a child, I watched my father perform a curious ritual. With the back of his hand, he would touch any door before attempting to open it, checking for the telltale heat of fire. Perhaps, it was this very ritual that had saved his life more than once.

John Wagner's remains have been cremated. Burial at sea is scheduled as soon as reasonable seas permit.

April Meeting Rescheduled

Important Note:

Because the Region 1 Conference will be held the weekend of our monthly meeting, it has been rescheduled for April 11th, at 6:00 PM. The meeting will be held at the VFW on Wales St. in Rutland, VT.

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter One
P.O. Box 6301
Rutland, VT 05702
Please Forward



Bill & Beth Higgins
RD #1 Box 88A
Castleton, VT 05735



Happy Easter!

"Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #1 will assist Vietnam Era Veterans, their families & others in the enhancement of their life experience through intervention and social interaction."



Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter One

April-May, 1998 • Newsletter • Number 5, Vol. 4-5

From the Desk of John Bergeron, President

There is an important meeting change for June:

Saturday, June 6th will be changed to Saturday, June 13th at 6:00 p.m., Board of Directors meeting at 5:00 p.m., due to the parade and State Council meeting in Chester, VT on June 6th.

Chapter One wishes to extend our sympathy to our new lifetime member Ted Goodfleisch, who just lost his wife, Shirley. She passed away on April 24th at 10:24 p.m. after a long illness.

Saturday July 4th is the parade in Brandon. A suggestion was made to have the meeting after the parade in Brandon in conjunction with a chapter picnic. We are currently investigating possible sites. I think it all depends on the amount of people who are interested. So let's take a head count - those of you who would be interested, please contact us. Write or call 773-2815 before the June 13th meeting.

Bill: S.296 was signed into law on April 14, 1998 by Governor Dean. S.296 is an act relating to special vehicle number plates. This means we now have Veterans license plates for the State of VT. For an additional \$10.00 fee you can have a Veterans plate.

Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial Update: According to Don Reamy, he will finish the sculpting of the marble by the 2nd or 3rd week in May. Don has done wonders in the transforming this 3 ton piece of marble into a work of art that we all can be proud of. The next step after he has completed his work is to have the names of those Killed In Action from Rutland County sandblasted into the stone.

All the benches have been completed. The flag pole has arrived, the display boxes are in and the design for the memorial signs has been completed by Mike at Green Screen Graphics.

Hope to see you all at the upcoming parades, events, and of course, at the meeting on the 13th.

John

It is our policy to provide an open forum to all. Therefore, the articles, letters and ads contained herein do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of VVA #1 or VVA National.

Minutes of April 11 Meeting

VFW Club Rooms, Rutland, Jack Crowther, Secretary

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm. About 9 members were in attendance.

A new face among those attending was Harriet Thorne of Chittenden.

Minutes of March 7 meeting were read and approved.

Treasurer's report showed a beginning balance of \$815.00 and an ending balance of \$1,961.05. The increase was mainly due to \$1,000 of proceeds from rip-off ticket sales at Bruno's in West Rutland.

Treasurer Jon Pintello will check on the forwarding of the local share of dues from national VVA to make sure we are getting the proper amount.

John Bergeron reported \$118 in product sales over the past month. He ordered \$213 in additional products to boost Chapter 1's inventory. He's going to check on jackets.

Membership: Dick Doyle reported 145 members through March 27, but noted we are losing 47 members through non-renewals. The chapter will provide a reminder with the next newsletter, encouraging those whose membership has expired to renew. Chapter 1 will reimburse Faie Shepard for dues of her husband, Eugene, who passed away in March.

Color Guard: The Color Guard will take part in the July 4th Parade in Brandon and perhaps Memorial Day in Fair Haven

Fund Raising: The recent Debate on School Choice yielded \$97 in ticket proceeds and \$70 in 50-50 ticket sales. The chapter agreed to seek a concession at the Ethnic Food Festival in Rutland on June 21. The idea is to sell ice cream with maple syrup.

Jake Jacobson, a founding member of the chapter, was present and recommended the re-establishment of the Ethan Allen 100+ Award, renamed as the Don Bodette 100+ Award. The Ethan Allen 100+ Award was awarded a half-dozen times in the early days of the chapter to honor someone who went "beyond the call of duty" on behalf of Vietnam Veterans or veterans in general. The award featured a plaque with the figure of Ethan Allen. The number 100 symbolizes the 100-plus Vermonters that died in Vietnam. The award also led to two other awards, a scholarship and a humanitarian award, both designed to counter negative images of Vietnam Veterans. Jake said he felt the chapter needed to do something to honor the memory of Bodette, the spearhead behind establishment

Continued on page 2

Minutes of April 11, Continued

of a community-based VVA organization in the U.S. Don died of cancer on Aug. 10, 1997. After some discussion, Dick Doyle moved to reinstate the Ethan Allen 100+ Award and to call it the Don Bodette 100+ Award. Second: Dave Jarvie. Passed unanimously. Details of the award and the scholarship will be developed.

Dick Doyle described the presentation of awards at the recent Region Conference in Bennington. One was the Legion of Merit, presented by VVA national President George Duggins to George Bodette, the father of the late Don Bodette. The award honors Don for leading the way as founder of VVA's first chapter.

Old Business: Dick Doyle reported that House Bill 624 had been signed by Gov. Dean last week, and there are 51 sites in Vermont where the POW-MIA flag will fly. However, flags will have to be donated. Chapter 1 may donate one of the flags.

Joe Donaldson is a new life member.

Rutland Memorial: It is becoming unlikely that Chapter 1 will meet its original Memorial Day target for installation of the memorial in Rutland's Main Street Park, but will proceed as completion of the design permits.

State Council: Next State Council meeting was Saturday, April 18, at 11 a.m. at the VFW club rooms. Dick Doyle noted that terms of our current three delegates expire in October, and we need candidates, plus one for an alternate. Dick plans to take a break. Other delegates are Bill Picknell and Tom Reardon. Steve Faye is vice president.

Scott Anderson described a trip he is taking to Vietnam in a couple of weeks with others he served with in the 196th Light Infantry. The unit is featured in the book, "The Magnificent Bastards", by Dick Knowland. The trip will include Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), Hanoi and areas around Dong Ha, where the unit served. The group will meet with Ambassador Pete Peterson.

Elections:

President: Dick Doyle nominated John Bergeron for a fourth term as president. Second: Jon Pintello. Unanimous approval.

Vice President: Jon Pintello nominated Steve Faye. Second: Dick Doyle. Unanimous.

Secretary: Jon Pintello nominated Jack Crowther. Second: Scott Anderson. Unanimous.

Treasurer: Dick Doyle nominated Jon Pintello. Second Bill Whitney. Unanimous.

Board of Directors: Nominated were Dick Doyle, Bill Whitney, Scott Anderson and Dave Jarvie. Approved unanimously. The officers are also board members.

Harriet Thorne was named associate member liaison. She described her recent visit to the Vietnam War Memorial, "The Wall", in Washington, DC. The "Moving Wall" will be in Lyndonville June 12-14.

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 P.M.



VVA Chapter #1 Wishes to Thank the CVPS Shareholder Community Program and especially Mr. Hughes for the printing of the newsletter.

**Vietnam Veterans of America
Chapter One
Officers and Board of Directors**

Officers

President - John Bergeron - (802) 773-2815

Vice President - Steve Faye - (802) 773-7305

Secretary - Jack Crowther

Treasurer - Jon Pintello - (802) 265-8602

Board Members

Dick Doyle - (802) 885-2167 - Work -

e-mail - rdoyle@pop.det.state.vt.us

Bill Whitney - (802) 875-2640

Scott Anderson

Dave Jarvie

Associate Liaison

Harriet Thorne

Veterans Benefits

Downloaded from the Internet

If you are a veteran, have a family member who is a veteran or know somebody who is, this news may be of some interest to you or them. Please feel free to pass it along.

The President of the U.S. has recently signed into law a bill that affects all veterans.

This law states in effect that if a veteran has not registered at a Veterans Affairs Hospital since October 1, 1996, then on October 1, 1998 he or she will lose all medical benefits for life. To make it worse, the V.A. cannot notify veterans about it. "at information must be disseminated via word of mouth by letter." (Note: This last sentence in quotes reads just as I received it. Obviously there are a few words missing in it.)

We called the local VA office and found out this information is true. They recommended that everyone eligible for benefits come by their office, and sign up prior to the October 1st deadline, regardless of whether they have received treatment at a V.A. hospital since 10/1/98. This way no one will slip through the cracks.

You will need to bring your DD-214 to your local VA office and it will only take about 5 minutes to complete the form. This will maintain your veterans benefits. If you cannot locate your DD-214, go to the VA office and they can help you obtain a copy.

Congressional Record

Senate Resolution S207

Statement by Sen. Jeffords

Downloaded from the Internet

Mr. President, I rise today with great pride and enthusiasm to introduce a Senate Resolution Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the founding of the Vietnam Veterans of America. This resolution has the cosponsorship of Senator Specter, Senator Akaka and Senator Leahy. The resolution also points out that April marks the 18th Anniversary of the founding of Vietnam Veterans of America's first local chapter in my home town of Rutland, Vermont.

Mr. President, the VVA is a Congressionally chartered national veterans service organization exclusively dedicated to Vietnam era veterans and their families. In the late 1970s, America had come through it's longest and most divisive war. Many of the millions of veterans who served during that period felt that their concerns were not being addressed by the veterans community and by the federal government.

In January, 1978, Bobby Muller and a small band of Vietnam veterans came to Washington, DC to create an advocacy organization to push for federal action to address the needs of this unique veterans population. The VVA, initially known as the Vietnam Veterans Coalition and then the Council of Vietnam Veterans, went to work focusing first on the dissemination of government information and coordination of relations between the federal government and the veteran.

In time it became clear that, like many other organizations, this one could not survive simply by making a good case for it's initiatives... it needed to build a strong membership base in order to wield political power. By the summer of 1979, the new Vietnam Veterans of America began to focus on building it's membership.

The growth of the organization was slow initially, but a breakthrough came in following resolution of the American Hostage Crisis in Iran in January, 1981. It became clear to many Americans that if the hostages deserved a jubilant homecoming, so did the veterans of Vietnam. Vietnam veterans began to clamor for action in the form of programs that would place the last generation of wartime veterans on the same footing as veterans from previous wars.

The strength of the organization grew with the

increase in membership. The public also became more willing to deal with the neglected veterans issues unique to the Vietnam War. This culminated in the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in November 1982. The activities around the Memorial rekindled a sense of camaraderie among the veterans and the feeling of a shared experience too significant to ignore.

Since then, the VVA has made great strides in the kinds of services it provides to its membership, including the founding of the Vietnam Veterans of America Legal Services that provides assistance to veterans seeking benefits and services from the government. VVA has also published critical information around benefits for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Agent Orange illnesses.

I can personally vouch for the incredible efforts of people like Albert and Mary Trombley, Jake Jacobsen, Dennis Ross, Clark Howland, and of course the late Mike Dodge and Don Bodette to establish and foster the growth of grassroots organizations like Chapter 1 in Rutland, Vermont. This individual leadership has ensured a steady growth in VVA's size, stature, and prestige.

The legislative accomplishments of the VVA through its high-profile presence on Capitol Hill have been impressive. Organizations like Vietnam-Era Veterans in Congress, which now boasts 70 members, have served the overall membership well by supporting the pragmatic agenda of the VVA and sticking to its founding principle that :Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."

Today, the VVA has a national membership of 51,000 with more than 500 chapters. VVA state councils in 43 states coordinate the activities and programs of its national organization, ensuring that grassroots input to Congress continues to ensure that the federal government meets its obligations to its Vietnam veterans.

Mr. President, this Resolution expressed the Senate's gratitude to the organization for its advocacy for its members and wishes it continued success for the years to come.



Congressional Record

Washington, Thursday, April 2, 1998
Senate

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA TWENTY YEARS OF SERVICE

MR. LEAHY: Mr. President. I rise today to commend the Vietnam Veterans of America for 20 years of service to veterans and their communities. In particular, I want to recognize the first chapter of VVA, which was founded in Rutland, Vermont.

If we remember back to the late 1970's our nation was dealing with the aftermath of a war in which more than 58,000 Americans lost their lives and 2.8 million veterans had served. Many of those veterans were struggling with physical, emotional, and social problems directly related to their service in Vietnam.

Those problems were worsened by the attitude of many Americans who could not separate their opposition to the war from their treatment of our soldiers who had fought it. It was in that spirit that a group of Vietnam Veterans from Vermont approached a resourceful young veteran named Bobby Muller. I am proud to say that Bobby Muller has become a close friend of mine and in fact was in Vermont with me just last week. The Vermonters, led by Donny Bodette and Jake Jacobson, founded the first chapter of what is now the Vietnam Veterans of America. I remember it well. They were soon joined by other Vermonters like Clark Howland, Mike Dodge, John Bergeron, and others. Together, Chapter One made it their mission to be there for Vermont Vietnam veterans and indeed all veterans.

In the twenty years since then, Chapter One has accomplished that mission, and in the process they have improved the whole Rutland community. They have not only offered assistance to fellow veterans, they have saved the lives of countless troubled veterans who had no where else to turn. Chapter One is responsible for the Dodge Development Center, a veterans center and shelter for homeless veterans which I have been proud to support. Members participate in the annual Rutland Loyalty Day Parade, Memorial Day and Veterans Day and the annual POW/MIA Day ceremonies. Chapter One has also initiated an "Honor the Vet Program" with area businesses. Under this program, local businesses agree to provide a discount to any veteran with a veteran organization membership card.

In short, Mr President, VVA Chapter One honors Vermont, just as its veterans honor us with their service in Vietnam. There are now four chapters carrying on the VVA tradition in Vermont. Besides Chapter One in Rutland, there is now Chapter 601 in Bennington, Chapter 723 in Chester and Chapter 753 in St. Albans.

I thank them for all they have done and I wish them the best on this landmark occasion.

FATHER PHIL SALOIS, M.S. NATIONAL CHAPLAIN TO VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

AND FELLOW VIET NAM VETERAN CLERGY
WILL BE OFFERING A WEEKEND RETREAT
FOR COMBAT VETERANS AND
SPOUSES AND SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

"PTSD AND SPIRITUAL HEALING WEEK-END"

ATTLEBORO, MASSACHUSETTS
SEPTEMBER 18-20, 1998
AT THE
CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING
947 PARK STREET - ATTLEBORO, MA

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
FATHER PHILLIP G. SALOIS, M.S.
NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF VIET NAM VETERAN MINISTERS
PO Box 2965, 947 PARK STREET
ATTLEBORO, MA 02703-0965
(508) 222-7313

PRICE:
\$125.00 PER PERSON INCLUDES ALL MEALS AND LODGING

FATHER PHIL SALOIS, M.S. NATIONAL CHAPLAIN TO VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

IS HOSTING THE NINTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF VIET NAM VETERAN MINISTERS

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO
OCTOBER 12-18, 1998
AT THE
DOMINICAN RETREAT CENTER

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
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PRICE:
\$300.00 PER PERSON INCLUDES ALL MEALS AND LODGING

Honor the Vet Program

The current participants of the Honor the Vet Program are listed below with their addresses, phone numbers and discounts.

<u>BUSINESS</u>	<u>DISCOUNT</u>
1. Northeast Army Navy Surplus Rt. 7 North, Rutland, 773-7322	10%
2. Downtown Has Sole Shoe Repair 13 Center St., Rutland	10%
3. Adirondack Tire Merchants Strongs Ave., Rutland, 775-1944	10-20%
4. Army Navy Store Center St., Rutland, 773-8839	10%
5. Sal's Restaurant West St., Rutland, 775-3360	10%
7. Howard's Sunoco S. Main St., Rutland, 775-7911	10%
8. Michael's Handmade Wooden Toys Center St., Rutland, 773-1488	10-20%
9. Buxton's Sunoco N. Main St., Rutland, 773-9747	5% off labor & parts
10. Greg Barsanti, C.P.A. Merchants Row, Rutland, 773-4038	20%
11. Two By Two-Handmade wooden jewelry Pittsford, 483-6121	10%
12. Boise's Electrical Service Rutland, 747-4481	10%
13. Battery Street Jeans Merchants Row, Rutland, 773-6445	10%
14. Leather Fashions, Inc. Disc. <u>plus</u> they pay the tax! Merchants Row, Rutland, 775-3099	
15. Lemon Rentals Rt. 4, W. Rutland, 800-639-6460	12% on car or van rentals
16. McNeil & Reedy, Inc. Merchants Row, Rutland, 773-7760	10%

17. **Back Home Cafe/Clem's Kitchen** 20% off food items
21 Center St., Rutland, 775-9313
18. **Eastman's** 10% (custom framing not included)
66-70 Merchant's Row, Rutland
19. **Ole Time Watch and Jewelry Repair** 10%
3 Strongs Ave., Rutland, VT
20. **A & J Auto Parts** 10% (except on sale items)
176 West St., Rutland, 775-5584
21. **Classic Stitching**, Computerized Embroidery 10%
185 Main St., Vergennes, 877-3659
22. **Pasqually's** 10%
162 N. Main St., Rutland, 775-7040
23. **Sevigny's Hunting & Fishing** 10%
236 Main St., W. Rutland, 438-2977
24. **Freeman Jewelers** 10%
76 Merchants Row, 773-2792
25. **Jake's Light Trucking** 10%
W. Rutland, 438-5188
26. **Big Daddy's Used Cars** 5% on truck accessories
Center Rutland, 438-2558
27. **Rutland Optical** 10% off complete pair of glasses
28 Center St., Rutland, 775-0121
28. **Paradee & Associates** 20% off all services
Legal Investigations, Burlington, 860-6100

Thanks to all these establishments for believing in the veteran! Show your membership card from any veteran's organization (or other proof of service) to obtain your discount at any of these places!

Do you know of a business who might like to participate in The Honor The Vet Program? Contact Tom Reardon at 518-499-2488 to have a representative visit the business & explain the program.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, CHAPTER ONE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership in Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter one is open to all Vietnam Era Veterans. Associate Membership is open to family members, friends, and concerned citizens. Return this

form with \$20 annual membership dues and a copy of your DD-214 (if applicable) to:

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter One, PO Box 6301, Rutland, VT 05702. Upon receipt of your dues, Chapter One will issue a temporary membership card like the one below. This will serve as your authorized membership card until you receive one from National.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

_____ Vietnam Era _____ New _____ Renewal

_____ Associate _____ New _____ Renewal



Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter One - 1998

This is to certify that

John Doe

is a member in good standing of the
Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #1

Sgt. Pepper

Membership Committee Chairman
Temporary Membership Card



FREEDOM ISN'T FREE

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

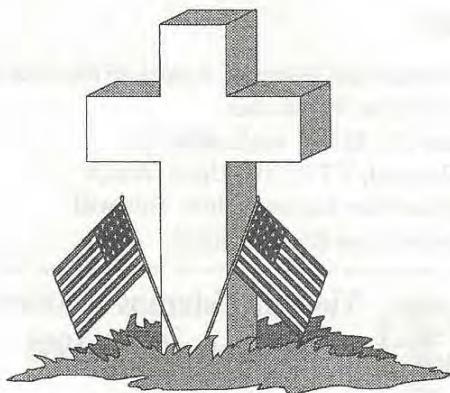
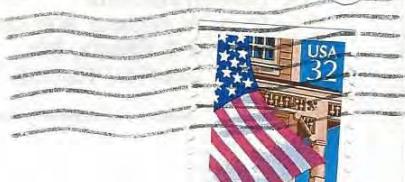
SUBMITTED BY HARLAN HATFIELD, CHAPTER ONE MEMBER FROM CALIFORNIA

I watched the flag pass by one day,
It fluttered in the breeze.
A young soldier saluted it, and then
He stood at ease.
I looked at him in uniform
So young, so tall, so proud.
With hair cut square and eyes alert
He'd stand out in any crowd.
I thought how many men like him
Had fallen through the years.
How many died on foreign soil?
How many mother's tears?
How many Pilot's planes shot down?
How many foxholes were soldiers' graves?
No, Freedom isn't free.

I heard the sound of taps one night,
When everything was still.
I listened to the bugler play
And felt a sudden chill.
I wondered just how many times
That taps had meant "Amen"
When a flag had draped a coffin
of a brother or a friend.
I thought of all the children,
Of the mothers and the wives,
Of fathers, sons and husbands
With interrupted lives.
I thought about a graveyard
At the bottom of the sea
Of unmarked graves in Arlington

No..... FREEDOM ISN'T FREE!!!!

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter One
P.O. Box 6301
Rutland, VT 05702
Please Forward



Memorial Day
May 25, 1998

Bill & Beth Higgins
RD #1 Box 88A
Castleton, VT 05735

"Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #1 will assist Vietnam Era Veterans, their families & others in the enhancement of their life experience through intervention and social interaction."



Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter One

June, 1998 • Newsletter • Number 5, Vol. 6

From the Desk of John Bergeron, President

Great things have taken place the last few weeks; parades during Memorial Day, the Candle Light Vigil in Depot Park.

Our Memorial Day Candle Light Vigil was held on Friday, May 29th with 50 people taking part. We read all the names of those who were killed in WWI & II, Korea & Vietnam from Rutland County.

But the one thing that stands out among all the events of the last few weeks was the play that the young folks from Rutland High School Drama Department performed. The name of the play was "The Wall - A Pilgrimage". They did a marvelous job with the acting but it also was an educational experience for them. Some of them have gone to the Wall in Washington. They did a great deal of research on their subject matter.

VVA #1 was invited to bring a display to be included with their program. They had a special showing of the play for veterans and after the play concluded we discussed the play and other related matters. They were sincerely interested in our input, we enjoyed our evening, and it certainly was a pleasure conversing with a great group of young adults. The Play was very well attended both nights it was presented to the public.

We would like to thank our newest Life Member, Donald Robichaud for his most generous donation to VVA #1. Also thanks to Chapter 721 of Keyport, New Jersey and to Carolyn Taylor for their donations to the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Once again there is some misinformation being spread throughout the Veterans Community. We are being told that for those of us who aren't in the computer in White River Junction VA Hospital, we have until this October to register or we will be left out in the cold. Not True. According to Ed Lynch, the VA Benefits Administrator, the reason for having to register by October is so that the VA will have a

better idea of how many potential users of the VA facility there are for the upcoming year. Apparently they are going to try something new and that is to try and budget their money for a change. So if for some reason you don't register by October 1, you will still be able to get care at the hospital. If you have any questions, please call the VA at the 1-800-827-1000.

Hope to see you all at the July meeting - Read All About It in the Color Guard Memo from Tom Reardon!

- John -

Color Guard Memo

Well, we are well into our marching season with three ceremonies under our belt; Loyalty Day, Memorial Day, and Chester Alumni Parade.

The next scheduled event is the Fourth of July Parade in Brandon on July 4, 1998. We will meet on High Street in Brandon at 1230 hours for kick-off around 1300 hours. I do hope we have enough People to display our colors, we have had poor turnout at all functions except Loyalty Day.

Our July Meeting will be held directly after the parade at Vermont Tubbs in Brandon. By doing this we can eliminate the need to come back into Rutland. I have made the arrangements for us to use the cafeteria if it rains so we can be in out of the weather.

To get to Vermont Tubbs from Brandon: Go North on Route 7 til you come to Arnold District Road (about 3/4 mile), which is across from the cemetery. Turn left onto Arnold District Road and go til you see Vermont Tubbs (which can be seen as soon as you turn onto Arnold District Road) Green building - use first driveway.

We need more members for the Color Guard as I would like to be able to do military funerals, as well as our parades. Arrangements have been made with the Rutland Armory for M-16s for firing details should we get enough people interested. Anyone interested in joining the Color Guard please contact John Bergeron at 802/773-2815 or Tom Reardon at 518/499-2488.

VVA Chapter #1 Wishes to Thank the CVPS Shareholder Community Program and especially Mr. Hughes for the printing of the newsletter.

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Attention Gourmet Chefs: Recipes Wanted

VVA Chapter 18 of Grand Rapids, Michigan would like to put together a collection of recipes from all the Vietnam Veteran Chapters in the United States and Canada.

We would like to compile this book and have it printed in time for the 1999 convention.

They are asking each chapter to put an article in their newsletter asking for their members to send in their favorite recipes. There is NO limit on how many recipes can be submitted. Each recipe must, however, be typed or Hand Printed so that they are easily readable. Please include your name, chapter number, city and state. All recipes should be sent to the following address:

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 18

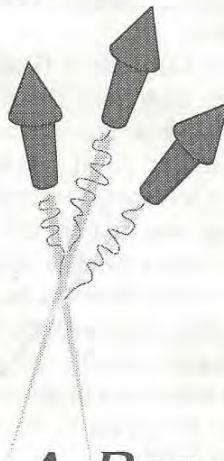
Michael J. Bost

P.O. Box 1766

Grand Rapids, Mich. 49501

Attn: Cookbook

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter One
P.O. Box 6301
Rutland, VT 05702
Please Forward



*Have A Bang-Up
Fourth of July!*

"Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #1 will assist Vietnam Era Veterans, their families & others in the enhancement of their life experience through intervention and social interaction."

The Declaration of Independence

July 4, 1776

'WE hold THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT, THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, THAT THEY ARE ENDORED BY THEIR CREATOR WITH CERTAIN UNALIENABLE RIGHTS, THAT AMONG THESE ARE LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS. THAT TO SECURE THESE RIGHTS, GOVERNMENTS ARE INSTITUTED AMONG MEN, DERIVING THEIR JUST POWERS FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED. THAT WHENEVER ANY FORM OF GOVERNMENT BECOMES DESTRUCTIVE OF THESE ENDS, IT IS THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO ALTER OR TO ABOLISH IT, AND TO INSTITUTE NEW GOVERNMENT, LAYING ITS FOUNDATION ON SUCH PRINCIPLES AND ORGANIZING ITS POWERS IN SUCH FORM, AS TO THEM SHALL SEEM MOST LIKELY TO EFFECT THEIR SAFETY AND HAPPINESS.'



Bill & Beth Higgins
RD #1 Box 88A
Castleton, VT 05735



Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter One

August, 1998 • Newsletter • Number 5, Vol. 7

From the Desk of John Bergeron, President

Remember those days when we all thought that we were going to live forever and that we were indestructible. Anyone over 30 were "Old Farts". Now that we have become the "Old Farts" we seem to look at life somewhat differently. We males are having our prostates biopsied and our colons pushed & prodded. And the female species are going through all those hot flashes, mood swings, etc. Why were we not informed about all of this when we were younger?

And what really hits close to home is when you read the "Obits" and you see all those names with their ages equivalent to ours. *Much too young*, you say, but a fact of life. It's a rude awakening. Over the past few months we have buried a few of our own. The most recent being Peter J. Clark. He had been a member of VVA #1 for only a year.

Peter J. Clark

TOPSHAM - The funeral service for Peter J. Clark, 55, who died Saturday at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, NH, was held Wednesday at 10 a.m. at the East Corinth Congregational Church. The Rev. Holly Noble officiated. Burial took place at the Vermont Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Randolph.

He was born Feb. 15 1943, in Louisville, KY, son of William and Virginia (Sprague) Clark.

Mr. Clark graduated from William Penn High School in Newcastle, Del. He graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in biology from Milligan College and attended the Medic program at Dartmouth and later at Castleton State College, where he received an associate degree in nursing. He also attended the West Point Officer Leadership Training program.

Mr. Clark was drafted after his third year of college and served in Cu Chi in Vietnam as a front line Medex. He spent eight years with the 351 Army Hospital in Fort Devens, MA, and was in inactive reserve for six years. He later enlisted into the Army Reserve Nurse Corps, retiring with a

rank of captain. Mr. Clark was awarded the Purple Heart. After retirement from the service, he served as a nurse at the Windsor State Prison and at the Hanover Healthcare Terrace in Hanover, NH. For the past three years he has been disabled.

Mr. Clark was a member of the East Corinth Congregational Church, the Order of the Purple Heart, the Vermont Vietnam Veterans of America in Windsor, the VFW Post 9685 of Windsor; and served as Boy Scout Master of Troop 752 in East Corinth.

Survivors include his wife, Barbara West of East Corinth, whom he married October 17, 1970 in Newport, DE; two sons, Peter Clark Jr. of Claremont, NH, and William Clark of East Corinth; his mother of New Brunswick, NJ; a sister, Diantha "Clark" Udell of New Brunswick; and two grandchildren.

The Hale Funeral Home in Bradford was in charge of arrangements.

Our deepest condolences go to Peter's family in their time of loss.

We would like to thank Mr. & Mrs. John Colombo of March A.F.B., CA for their \$20.00 donation in memory of Peter.

On a more positive note, VVA #1 gave its first scholarship to Heather Brower. The \$250 scholarship will be used by Heather in her freshman year at Purchase Collage in New York. She recently graduated from Rutland High School and will major in theater arts. We would like to wish Heather the very best and will be waiting her first report from Purchase. Heather's father was a corpsman in Vietnam and is currently a nurse at the Rutland Hospital.

The VSO Show is still on for Veterans Day. The Marble Valley Players are seeking people to help and to take part in the show. Also they would like people to read letters from home. If interested call John at 773-2815.

See the message on the back page about the next meeting. Hope to see you there.

- John -

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Highlights of the August Meeting

Our finances are in good shape currently, with approximately \$4,900 in the bank, outside of funds for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Rutland. A recent contribution of \$1,000 by new life member Donald Robichaud of Harvard, MA, has certainly helped, as has another \$500 from Bruno's in West Rutland, which is selling rip-off tickets for us.

Membership is at 125, still strong, but below the 140-plus of earlier this year.

Chapter 1 is contributing \$125, plus assistance, to the August 8 picnic at the Veterans Home in Bennington.

Construction of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Rutland awaits the measurement and staking out of the plot on the south end of Main Street Park and the availability of the contractor, who is donating his services. The sculpture by Don Ramey is almost complete.

No Mail = No Newsletter

For the second time this year, we have skipped a month in publishing the VVA Chapter 1 Newsletter.

The reason for this is simple, but sad. Nobody bothers to submit anything. We can't make things up out of thin air. We know that there are things happening out there in your towns, in the veterans community, or in the world at large.

Please, people, take the time to cut the articles out of your papers, or make a photocopy, and send them to us.

They can be mailed to the chapter address, or direct to Beth Higgins, RR 1 Box 88A, Castleton, VT 05735.

They can also be e-mailed to me at: bethbill@vermontel.net.

Remember, without you, there is no newsletter.

September Meeting Info

The September meeting of VVA #1 will be held on **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1998** at **5:00 P.M.** It will be held at **13 CENTER STREET**, which is the location of John's store.
DOWNTOWN HAS SOLE SHOE REPAIR. For Directions CALL 773-2815.

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter One
P.O. Box 6301
Rutland, VT 05702
Please Forward



September 7, 1998

Bill & Beth Higgins
RD #1 Box 88A
Castleton, VT 05735

"Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #1 will assist Vietnam Era Veterans, their families & others in the enhancement of their life experience through intervention and social interaction."



Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter One

October, 1998 • Newsletter • Number 5, Vol. 8

Apology Offered

The following was given to us by Joe Yandle at his request to have it printed in our newsletter.

Joe Yandle was paroled to Vermont in 1995 after serving 23 years of a life sentence for murder. Joe drove the getaway car after his partner robbed the store and shot and killed the owner. Joe has recently been returned to Massachusetts to face charges that he had lied about his military records to gain his freedom.

From: Joseph Yandle

As some of you are already aware, something has recently come to light that deserves both an explanation and a apology. This is a sad, painful but necessary step to take, and possibly the most difficult thing that I have ever had to do.

First, I need to say that there was, and is no excuse for my actions, and that although I have tried to find a way, there is no suitable reason that I can give to explain how and why this happened. Yet, in fairness to you an explanation needs to be given, so that maybe some understanding of this situation can be resolved. For those of you who are not aware of what I am talking about, I am referring to the fact that in the past I have lied about my military service, in particular my supposed service in Vietnam. This was a lie that gained me the support of many veterans in this state, and across the country in helping to facilitate the commutation of my sentence by Governor William Weld.

It is not so much the fact I lied, it is what that lie was based upon. I am both ashamed and saddened knowing that what I have done disparaged, and took away from those men and women who did serve in Vietnam, all that was rightfully theirs. Although, I did in fact go to Vietnam, I was only there for less than half a day at Danang before being shipped back to Okinawa to join the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade, where I spent the rest of my tour in the military. I did lie about my service record, however, I did serve in the U.S. Marine Corps from August 1966-September 1969, and was honorably discharged on September 15, 1969.

My behavior was inappropriate, and should not be excused. I know that many people will, and should be morally offended

by my actions. This is a lie that began a long time ago. After returning to Okinawa I did in fact have a heroin habit, that I had spent time in the Camp Butler, Okinawa brig for before my release. I needed help with my addiction, and felt that I could get help at the V.A. I did not have a service related disability, and I thought that by saying I served in Vietnam that I would get help I sought, and I did. When I was first incarcerated I was a young man frightened at the idea of spending the rest of my life in prison, having to deal with other convicts. I felt that I needed to build a reputation, or a history that would keep other inmates at bay, and that would be my source of protection. These were the beginnings of this fabrication. I know now, and have known for a very long time that it was an inappropriate decision on my part to create this story, and over the years, as most lies do, this one snow balled into something that got completely out of control.

After serving more than fifteen years, I truly believed that I no longer belonged in prison. I had one young stepson, and another child on the way and I wanted, and felt I deserved to be home with my family, but I could not get anyone to listen. This was at the time of the "Willie Horton" era, and no politician wanted to hear anything about commuting anyone's sentence. How was I to get someone to listen, to take notice? By that time I had done a lot of work in prison with both the A.V.I.P. and V.V.A., and had almost come to believe what I had been saying. A friend mentioned that I should use Vietnam as a possible way to at least get a hearing, and I agreed. However, I behaved in a cowardly manner by not putting an end to this farce before it had gone so far.

When it got out of control I found myself in the position of telling all those people who had helped me that I had lied, which would of been the end of it and would of kept me in prison, or to continue with it and hope that if I were released that it would be forgotten. I wanted to go home to my family. I felt that because of what I done that I had served enough time, and that I had in fact changed my life around (although it would be difficult to prove it by this) and deserved an opportunity, so I continued the lie.

There is no one to blame for this but me. No one else was aware of this until after the fact. When I told my wife Jan

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about this after my release she was devastated. It caused such a rift in our twenty seven year relationship that it has led to a divorce. Others who found out, particularly VVA people, decided that it would be in the best interest of VVA to say nothing. They also felt that it would serve no purpose for me to go back to prison, that whether or not I had served in Vietnam, in and of itself, was not, and should not have been the impetus for my commutation. Where they wrong in their decision? That is not for me to decide. These were people who took me at my word, who had become good friends over the course of many years, and they should not need to pay the price of my deceit. The feelings about what I have done, the sense of betrayal have been overwhelming, for myself as well as others. What I did was unconscionable. Yet, I hope that judgement is not passed to quickly, and that people will at least try to understand how and why this could happen.

After my release I refused all offers to speak before veterans groups, or about veterans matters since coming to Vermont. I did not want to continue or perpetuate this lie. I had hoped to put an end to it, hoping perhaps that it might even go away. But as lies always do, they have a way of coming back on you, and now I need to be responsible for what I have done. I have since spoken with the President of VVA Chapter #1 and some other Vermont veterans to let them know what has transpired.

One of the obvious factors in all of this is that this lie will overshadow everything I did accomplish in those twenty three years, and in the years since my release. I now work as a substance abuse counselor in a residential treatment center, have taught school as an adjunct teacher for the Vermont Department of Corrections at parole and probation and in the county jail, and volunteer as a teacher at an alternative school for kids that have been thrown out of the traditional school systems. But will any of this really matter? The question has been asked about whether or not I will be returned to prison. Probably. Do I deserve that? That will not be my decision, and will depend upon how I am judged in the he court of public opinion. I can only hope somehow, that what I did, and what I have accomplished since my release can in someway be balanced.

It is understandable that this will be considered by many to be too little, too late, and also meaningless. Regardless of that, I owe it to you to apologize for what I have done. You certainly did not deserve to be treated in such a manner, and I am truly, truly sorry. There is no pain like dealing with the pain of a lie that has gone on for so long. Everyone is affected.

There are some of you who need to be singled out for a direct, personal apology. Dan Carr, Rich Earley, Bill Purcell, Rich Levesque, and Fr. Phil Salois placed their friendship on the line for me, and will certainly be hurt most by this. As with my ex-attorney, and former friend Joe Shea, I broke a trust, one that I can never share again with these men. Men who at one time I could call "friend".

There are really no words that can express or explain how sorry I am that I deceived you all. I hope that someday you will be able to forgive the loss of trust and faith that I have caused you.

Respectfully,
Joseph Yandle

Hard to Hear Unspeakable Truths

Letter to the Editor, 9/12/98

I was perplexed by "Vietnam Myths and Phony Vets" (Sept. 3), Dennis Jensen's commentary about sociologist Jerry Lembeke, who claims that Vietnam veterans were not spat upon when they returned home from the war. Mr. Lembeke's book, "The Spitting Image," suggests that stories of spitting were planted by Nixon politicos wanting to drive a wedge between returning vets and anti-war protestors. To back up this theory, Mr. Lembeke cites the lack of photographic evidence of spitters.

Mr. Lembeke has created quite an uproar - especially among veterans who clearly remember being spat upon. A few weeks back, USA Today ran a story about Mr. Lembeke's book. A week later that paper published a brief note from me in which I said that in my two years of conversations with Vietnam veterans (researching "Unspeakable Truths and Happy Endings: Human Cruelty and the New Trauma Therapy," published this year by Sidran) I heard many stories of hitting, spitting, beating and punching. Most veterans I interviewed also told of keeping their medals hidden in closets and refusing to march in patriotic parades to this day, afraid of what bystanders might do. After my note was published, many, many, many veterans contacted me to say, "thanks". Not one of the veterans contacting me suggested that I was in error and that Jerry Lembeke was in the clear.

One veteran who contacted me had already called Jerry Lembeke and told him about his own experience "returning from Nam in June of 1965 and being jeered and booed by a band of anti-war demonstrators at Travis Air Force Base." According to this vet, Lembeke "questioned whether such an incident could have actually taken place. He cited some factors he had learned from his research, pointed out that my narrative did not concur with what he understood from his research, and concluded that while I had my own personal recollection, there was no documented evidence of any such incidents...therefore, the incident I related couldn't have happened."

Apparently it was a calm, rather arrogant denial of vividly held memory, and the veteran took it in stride - possible because he'd been disbelieved so many times before. In my two years of talking to veterans and other survivors of catastrophic experiences, I learned from many that they meet with this sort of denial all of the time. Fear, revulsion, or even a simple failure of the imagination on the part of the listener, renders survivors' truths unbelievable and, eventually, unspeakable.

Our failures as listeners may not be ill intentioned, but their efforts are certainly not benign. Survivors of war, Holocaust, street crime, family violence, sexual assault, and political terror told me repeatedly of the sorrow they felt when they braved articulating the horrors they had suffered and friends and family could not listen and believe. Richard Bikales, a survivor of Nazi death camps told me, "Even now it's very had. Even if they listen, they don't understand. The words aren't there that really describe what's inside me. How do you describe the feelings? How do you describe the events? How do you describe the horror? I don't know.."

So while I am astounded by Jerry Lembeke's slick refusal to take vivid, well-articulated personal testimony as evidence of truth, I do give him the benefit of the doubt. He is probably not extraordinarily thick-headed. I'm inclined to think he's just a regular guy with regular limitations. Many of us have difficulty managing our emotions and integrity when the stories we hear run directly counter to the stories we wish we were hearing.

Rebecca Coffey
Brattleboro

Highlights of the September Meeting

The chapter unanimously approved a donation of \$1,000 to the Dodge Development Center, to be made in quarterly payments beginning October 1, 1998. The recently opened center has three clients already with a fourth expected. The Wild Woods Music Co-op held a benefit concert Friday, Oct. 16th at Amelia's Canteen at the Vermont State Airport.

A new supply of T-shirts is for sale at \$10 per shirt. Chapter jackets can now be purchased for approximately \$51, with a 16 inch chapter logo on the back.

The chapter has voted to make all of its meetings smoke-free.

A program of the Rutland Garden Club has offered to maintain the Rutland Vietnam Veterans Memorial plantings when the memorial is completed.

Steven R. Hodgin

The memorial service for Steven R. Hodgin, 43, of Rutland, who died unexpectedly, was held at the Roadside Chapel Assemble of God Church, Town Line Road, in Rutland Town. The Rev. Daniel VanLuven, pastor, officiated.

He was born in Bennington on March 31, 1955, son of Percy and Anne (Cotrell) Hodgin.

Mr. Hodgin was a graduate of Mount Anthony Union High School and served in the US Marine Corps in Vietnam from 1972 to 1976.

Survivors include his wife, Edna Johnson Hodgin of Rutland, whom he married on February 17, 1974; his mother of Brattleboro; three sons: Thomas Hodgin, Charley Hodgin and Kurt Hodgin, all of Rutland; two brothers, Bruce Hodgin of Danby and John Hodgin of Colorado; a sister, Joanne LaValley of Massachusetts; nieces and nephews.

There were no visiting hours.

Contributions may be made to Steven R. Hodgin Memorial Fund, 36 East St., Rutland, VT 05701.

Bombing of Embassy in Africa

One of the men that was killed in the embassy in Nairobi is the son of Ken and Debbie Hobson, Vice President of VVA Chapter 610 in Missouri. Ken Hobson, Jr. leaves a wife and two year old daughter. Condolences may be sent to: Mr. & Mrs. Ken Hobson, Sr., 1802 Mill St., Lamar, Missouri 64759.

FROM THE OTHER SIDE

Part 1

"At first there was no place for us to go until someone put up that Black Granite Wall. Now, everyday and night, my Brothers and my Sisters wait to see the many people from places afar file in front of this Wall. Many stopping briefly and many for hours and some that come on a regular basis. It was hard at first, not that it's gotten any easier, but it seems that many of the attitudes towards that war that we were involved in have changed. I can only pray that the ones on the other side have learned something and more Walls as this one needn't be built. Several members of my unit and many that I did not recognize have called me to the Wall by touching my name that is engraved upon it. The tears aren't necessary but are hard even for me to hold back. Don't feel guilty for not being with me, my Brothers. This was my destiny as it is yours, to be on that side of the Wall. Touch the Wall, my Brothers, so that we can share in the memories that we had. I have learned to put the bad memories aside and remember only the pleasant times that we had together. Tell our other Brothers out there to come and visit me, not to say Good Bye but to say Hello and be together again, even for a short time and to ease that pain of loss that we all share."

to be continued

Donation Received

We recently received a generous donation from Marjorie Dyer of Mendon, along with these kind words:
Dear Friends,

I can NEVER really put into words what I feel about all you gave to this country in Vietnam!

Thank you so much for your bravery - a am so proud of all of you.

*With love in my heart,
Marjorie*

Thanks so much, Marjorie, for the donation, and especially for the kind sentiments.

November Meeting Info

The November meeting of VVA #1 will be held on **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1998** at **5:00 P.M.** It will be held at **13 CENTER STREET**, which is the location of John's store.
DOWNTOWN HAS SOLE SHOE REPAIR.
For Directions CALL 773-2815.
This will a very important meeting:
John Miner, Vermont State Council President will be on hand to speak on major changes with VVA National, and how they will affect the chapter. Also, there is a possibility that Curtis Moner, Defense attorney of Joe Yandle will be on hand to discuss Joe's defense and answer questions. Moner is involved with the Prisoner Assistance Project. Please try to attend this very important meeting.

VVA #1 Scholarship Recipient

Heather Noelle Nasmith Brower graduated class of 1998 from Rutland High School in Rutland, VT. Heather is the daughter of John and Nancy Brower. She is attending Purchase College this fall and is enrolled in The Conservatory of Theatre Arts and Film design technology program. Through her interest in theatre as well as her families' involvement with the Vietnam War, Heather was able to co-direct a play that addresses the lasting effects that the war in Vietnam still has in present day America. This play, The Wall: A Pilgrimage, follows a families' first visit to The Wall. In presenting this play the entire company was able to hold an open rehearsal in which Vietnam Veterans were able to give personal feedback on the production and also share their memories and thoughts. This was an incredible experience theatrically as well as personally. Heather's father served in Vietnam and lost a cousin, who name stands proudly on The Wall with so many others. Heather would like to extend her utmost thanks and appreciation to all who were involved with the production and to the local VVA chapter for their continued support in the form of a scholarship for the 1998-1999 school year.

Dear Local VVA Members,

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my utmost thanks for the generous scholarship awarded me. I would also like to thank everyone who offered their time and effort to make Rutland High School's production of The Wall: A Pilgrimage a success. I learned a great deal from the experience that I will always carry with me. Thank you again for all of your support and for your generosity.
Sincerely, Heather Noelle Nasmith Brower

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter One
P.O. Box 6301
Rutland, VT 05702
Please Forward



Vote

November 3, 1998

Bill & Beth Higgins
RD #1 Box 88A
Castleton, VT 05735

"Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #1 will assist Vietnam Era Veterans, their families & others in the enhancement of their life experience through intervention and social interaction."



Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter One

November, 1998 • Newsletter • Number 5, Vol. 9

From the Desk of John Bergeron, President

I would like to thank everyone who attended the November meeting. And those of you who could not attend, I'm sure that you were there in spirit. One person who could not attend due to a recent stay in the hospital was Bill Higgins. On Election Day, November 3, 1998, Bill had his right hip replaced and will be laid up for quite a while. I'm sure he would like to receive bags of mail from our membership. His address is: Bill Higgins, RR 1, Box 88A, Castleton, VT 05735.

Jake Jacobsen is currently in the process of constructing a web page for VVA #1. If you have any input please contact Jake at his e-mail address: puralair@together.net.

The Vietnam Women's Memorial is still not paid for and they still need our help. We voted to donate \$100 towards this effort.

On November 22nd our Color Guard marched in the Holiday Parade which is held in Glens Falls, NY. This parade kicks off the Toys for Tots drive. We brought a toy with us as our entrance requirement and contribution.

It's of the utmost importance that you keep us informed of any address changes, especially those of your who live in Vermont due to the new E-911.

We are now taking orders for VVA #1 jackets. You have your choice of black or kelly green. Our logo is embroidered on the back. You can have your name on the front. The cost is \$51. If you are interested, please contact John.

The November issue of the Yankee Magazine has published a nice article about VVA #1. Included with the story is a photo of the three most photogenic members of our chapter. For those of you who may not get the "Yankee" in your area, contact me at 773-2815 or write to us and we'll get you a copy.

Next meeting will be held on Saturday, Dec. 5th, at 5:00 pm at Downtown Has Sole, 13 Center St., Rutland, VT. Questions call 773-2815.

I would like to close by wishing all of you and your families a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season.

John

Rutland Country Vietnam Veterans Memorial Update

We are committed to dedicating the memorial for Memorial Day, 1999.

We are currently forming committees and will need many Volunteers to reach this goal. So, if you would like to help, we need folks to organize the dedication, you know, getting guest speakers, etc., etc., etc.

We will also need some one to be the contact person for the Gold Star Mothers and other family members of those who died in Nam.

Please contact us at: VVA #1, PO Box 6301, Rutland, VT 05701. Thank you in advance for your help.

John's Web Finds

Military USA is an excellent way to find your buddies and information about your unit's reunions.

www.militaryusa.com/enhance/enhance/html-ssi

Veteran Complaint Hotlinks is a long list of links to people who you can take your case to if you have a complaint that is not being addressed.

www.orbiter.com/ramrod

The Military Order of the Purple Heart Web Ring:
Vetnet.xoom.com/moph

Veteran News and Information Services is an informative sight where you can e-mail congressional representatives. It provides the most recent information about political issues concerning managed health care and pending legislative issues which effect veterans.

www.vnis.com

VVA Chapter #1 Wishes to Thank the CVPS Shareholder Community Program and especially John Burns for the printing of the newsletter.

It is our policy to provide an open forum to all. Therefore, the articles, letters and ads contained herein do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of VVA #1 or VVA National.

FROM THE OTHER SIDE

Part 2

"Today, an irresistible and loving call comes from the Wall. As I approach I can see an elderly lady and as I get closer I recognize her.....It's Momma! As much as I have looked forward to this day, I have also regretted it because I didn't know what reaction I would have. Next to her, I suddenly see my wife and immediately think how hard it must of been for her to come to this place and my mind floods with the pleasant memories of 30 years past. There's a young man in a military uniform standing with his arm around her.....My God!.....It's...it has to be my son. Look at him trying to be the man without a tear in his eye. I yearn to tell him how proud I am, seeing him standing tall, straight and proud in his uniform. Momma comes closer and touches the Wall and I feel the soft and gentle touch I had not felt in so many years. Dad has crossed to this side of the Wall and through our touch, I try to convey to her that Dad is doing fine and is no longer suffering or feeling pain."

to be continued

Highlights of Nov. 7th Meeting

Chapter 1 went on record as opposing the \$10 fee for purchasing a Vermont Veterans license plate unless the fee goes to support the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington. The Chapter will send a letter stating its position to the government and other political leaders.

Because of requirements of the IRS, associate members (members who do not meet the VVA military period of service requirements) will now have their own organization. While some dissatisfaction was expressed about this, it's expected that associates will continue to be able to participate in Chapter 1 activities much as they have.

The chapter is getting close to ground breaking for the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial. President John Bergeron will talk to Ernie Smalley, the contractor who has volunteered to carry out excavating and other main elements of the construction. We may be able to pour concrete this fall.

Return to Active Chapter Status

To: Chapter 1

I am pleased to relay that VVA Chapter #001 was removed from suspension on October 19, 1998. The VVA Membership database now lists your chapter in Active status.

We apologize for the delay in notifying you of this action.
From: Allen Green, VVA National

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter One
P.O. Box 6301
Rutland, VT 05702
Please Forward



Happy Holidays

Bill & Beth Higgins
RD #1 Box 88A
Castleton, VT 05735

"Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #1 will assist Vietnam Era Veterans, their families & others in the enhancement of their life experience through intervention and social interaction."



Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter One

December, 1998 • Newsletter • Number 5, Vol. 10

Memo From George Duggins, Dated Oct. 22, 1998 Subject: IRS re: Associates

Over the past two months, VVA has been addressing the issue of "Associates" and how to resolve this situation with the IRS. Due to the complexity of the issue it was decided to keep this at the VVA Board of Directors (BOD) level until initial decisions could be made. The following is a recap of the situation to date:

By memo dated August 21, 1998, I informed the BOD that the IRS met with VVA to resolve the "Associate" issue. My memo of September 22, 1998, informed the BOD of the recent meeting held among the officers, staff, our lawyers and others wherein this issue was discussed and a tentative plan for presentation to the VVA BOD was formulated. The plan was to discuss this issue as soon as the October BOD meeting began. We will propose that a separate 501 (c) organization be established to which all "associates" will be transferred. The following is a history of this issue, the most recent events and the thought process which lead to this necessary proposal.

BACKGROUND

This issue has been under review for several years. The IRS has very specific rules for tax exempt organizations (501 (c)'s) and for organizations which receive contributions that are tax deductible to the donor. Two of these rules, which pertain to membership, relate to VVA's associates. Without being too technical, the first rule is that a veterans organization that wants to be tax exempt under 501 (c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code must ensure that (1) at least 75% of the organization's members must be past or present members of the US Armed Forces, and (ii) at least 97.5% of its members must be past or present members of the US Armed Forces, cadets, or spouses, widows or widowers of past or present members of the US Armed Forces. The second rule is that a veterans organization that wants contributions to it to be tax deductible must ensure that at least 90% of its members are war veterans. VVA could comply with these rules easily if its associates were not considered members. The dangerous problem of noncompliance arises when the IRS counts VVA's associates as members and says that VVA's associates throw VVA out of compliance with the 97.5% rules and the 90% rule.

Over the years, the IRS has questioned how associates were treated, what benefits they received, how they functioned within the VVA structure, whether they had the right to vote, etc. VVA has consistently taken the position that, because the VVA associates were not allowed to vote or to hold office, they should not be considered as members for purposes of the member qualification percentage. As you may remember, a few years ago, VVA dropped the word "member" from associate members and referred to associates

strictly as "associates". The IRS has disagreed with this attempted solution and has determined that associates should be considered in determining who is a member for purposes of the 75% test, the 90% test and the 97.5% test. The IRS says that VVA fails these tests when associates are counted as members.

IRS MEETING - AUGUST 12, 1998

On August 12, 1998, the IRS convened a meeting with VVA, represented by Don Alexander, former IRS Commissioner, his colleague Ed Gels and Joe Sternburg. The IRS was represented at this meeting by personnel from both the exempt organization area and the deductible donation area. The IRS clearly stated their position that "associates" were considered as members. Consequently, VVA did not qualify as a tax exempt organization and VVA was not eligible for tax deductible donations. Based upon a response by VVA to this issue several years ago, "associates" represent approximately 10 to 13 percent of VVA members - clearly exceeding the 97.5 and 90 percent thresholds. Current calculations have confirmed that this percentage relationship is consistent.

The IRS suggested that this situation could be resolved if associates were transferred to another type of 501 (c) organization. The IRS stated clearly that it was not their intent to put VVA out of business, merely to have VVA come into compliance with IRS regulations. They stated further, in response to separate questions by Alexander and Sternburg, that should VVA take the path suggested, VVA would incur no penalties that could have been levied during the period under investigation.

VVA's options were quite clear. VVA could change its structure to comply with the IRS's requirements, or VVA could fight the IRS in court. Our lawyers strongly advise against litigation.

VVA MEETING SEPTEMBER 18 & 19, 1998

My memo of September 22, 1998 briefly described our most recent meeting. This meeting took place over parts of three days with all issues being explored in detail and questions being answered to the fullest. During the course of these meetings we broke down the benefits and risks associated with various approaches. These were presented as follows:

RISKS OF LITIGATING AND LOSING

- Revocation of entitlement to receive tax deductible contributions would dry up VVA's resources and retroactive revocation would create massive disallowances for past years. If this were extended to VVA's tax exempt status it could mean a tax liability for former and current revenue - estimated @ 30 million dollars. (Estimated revenue of \$10 million average per year for ten years times a 30% tax rate)
- Costs of litigation could be in the range of \$400,000 to \$800,000.

VVA Chapter #1 Wishes to Thank the CVPS Shareholder Community Program and especially John Burns for the printing of the newsletter.

It is our policy to provide an open forum to all. Therefore, the articles, letters and ads contained herein do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of VVA #1 or VVA National.

- Total loss of Household Goods revenue as well as other donation revenue which depends on being tax deductible contributions.
- Other potential costs such as sales taxes and other taxes due to the loss of exempt status.
- We have informed the Household Goods buyers and they have stated that, if VVA chooses to litigate, they will submit their 60 day notices to terminate their relationship with VVA because of the need for donations to be tax deductible.

BENEFITS OF LITIGATING AND WINNING

- Moral victory.
- Can continue to expand "Associate" membership.
- Notoriety for having taken on the IRS and won.

RISKS OF RESTRUCTURING

- Some associates and some members may leave VVA.
- Loss of dues at national, state and chapter level.
- Potential loss of some chapters.
- VVA may lose some Associate Life Members.
- Must amend the VVA constitution.

BENEFITS OF RESTRUCTURING

- No loss of tax exempt status.
- No loss of being able to have contributions be tax deductible.
- Compliance with IRS regulations.
- NO loss of revenue.
- NO litigation costs.
- Possibility of increased members and dues revenue.

The conclusion of all who attended the meeting was that VVA must restructure and that the failure to restructure could be fatal to the organization.

VVA BOD MEETING OCTOBER 16, 1998

At the VVA BOD meeting on October 16, 1998, the following motion was presented, discussed and subsequently passed:

As part of resolving the disagreement with the IRS about VVA's associates, move that the Executive Officers be authorized:

- (1) to report to the IRS that VVA has decided to resolve the problem by forming a separate corporation for VVA's associates;
- (2) to submit to and discuss with the IRS proposed Articles of Incorporation for a separate corporation for VVA's associates;
- (3) to prepare and file in the District of Columbia final Articles of Incorporation for a separate corporation for VVA's associates and, following incorporation, to apply to the IRS for recognition of the new corporation as an exempt organization under section 501 (c) of the Internal Revenue Code;
- (4) to take such additional action as is necessary or desirable to assist in organizing the new corporation and in facilitating its start up period; and
- (5) to transfer to the new corporation any assets which may be appropriate, such as (a) any annual associate dues paid for 1999 and (b) any associate life membership dues.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

During the meeting with the IRS on August 12, 1998, VVA informed the IRS that the decisions they were recommending needed to be approved by the VVA BOD and that the next BOD meeting would be October 16 & 17, 1998, and that we would not be able to respond until after then. The IRS understood our position and gave VVA an extension of time until November 2nd to respond. We will prepare a letter which will present the VVA approval. Once approved by the IRS, we will proceed as stated above.

There are numerous questions which can not be answered at this time. All of these questions are valid and will be answered as soon as we reach that stage in the process. I am asking that all questions be forwarded to your Associate Liaisons and ultimately to Nancy Switzer. We will provide you with periodic updates and provide you with answers as soon as they become available.

Senate Bill Concerns License Plate Fees

The following bill will be introduced into the Senate this session - so we need to write to our legislators to let them 1) know about this bill and, 2) How you would like them to vote on the matter or if you would like to change the wording, etc.

Introduced by Senator Sears of Bennington County

Referred to Committee On:

Date:

Subject: Motor Vehicles; safety organization plates; service organization plates; fees

Statement of purpose: This bill proposes to eliminate the annual \$10 fee for veterans and other safety and service organization registration plates, and to redirect the revenue from veterans' plates from the transportation fund to the veterans' home needy fund.

An Act Relating To Safety and Service Organization Special Registration Plates

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont: Sec. 1. 23 V.S.A. § 304 (b)(2)(A) and (B) are amended to read:

(A) At the request of the leader of a safety organization or service organization, upon application and payment of an annual onetime fee of \$10.00 for each set of plates in addition to the annual fee for registration, special plates indicating membership in one of the "safety organizations" or "service organizations" may be issued to registrants of vehicles registered at the pleasure car rate and of trucks registered for not more than 8,099 pounds.

Sec. 2. 23 V.S.A. § 304 (j) is amended to read:

(j) The commissioner of motor vehicles shall, upon proper application for a new or renewed registration, issue special plates to Vermont veterans, as defined in 38 U.S.C. § 101(2), for use only on vehicles registered at the pleasure car rate and on trucks registered for not more than 8,099 pounds. Applicants shall apply on forms prescribed by the commissioner and the applicant's status as a veteran shall be certified by the Veterans' Administration or by other documentation as required by the commissioner. The type and style of the veterans' plate shall be determined by the commissioner, except that an American flag shall appear on one side of the plate. An annual onetime fee of \$10.00 shall be assessed in addition to the annual fee for registration. The plates shall be reissued only to the original holder of the plates or the surviving spouse. Notwithstanding section 502 of Title 32, the commissioner may charge the actual costs of production of the plates against the fees collected and shall remit the balance to the transportation veterans' home needy fund. The commissioner shall adopt rules to implement the provision so this subsection.

Women's Health Study

Conducted by the VVA National Agent Orange Dioxin committee

This committee has elected to gather information regarding the health problems of the wives and/or significant others of Vietnam Veterans and the female Veterans that were in Vietnam and exposed to Agent Orange, this is called the study group. We also need to gather the same information from women who have not been married to or had an intimate relationship with an in country Vietnam Veteran, this is the control group. If you would like a survey form, please contact VVA #1 at PO Box 6301. Rutland. VT 05702.

Vietnam Myths and Phony Vets

Commentary by Dennis Jensen, Excerpt from *The Rutland Herald*,
September 3, 1998

In the early 1970's, after graduating from college under the GI Bill, I found it difficult to find a job that paid a decent wage.

In dozens of job applications, I made it a point to fill out the section under "veteran" status and mention the fact that I had done a tour of duty in Vietnam in 1967-68.

But most of the time, the interviews didn't happen. Could it be possible that I was hurting my job search by noting my status as a veteran? While it can never be proven, there is no doubt in my mind that I was.

The Vietnam War was a sad and angry chapter in our country's history.

The mindset of many Americans in the early '70s regarding Vietnam veterans and the war itself is vastly different today than it was back then.

Those days, the country's spirit was drained by the deaths of more than 60,000 Americans and by anti-war demonstrations.

Americans were sick of hearing about Vietnam and justifiably so. At the same time, veterans of the war were not given the respect that they deserved.

Twenty-five years after the war's end, the Vietnam veterans often take on a kind of "mythic warrior" status, due largely - and understandable - to ignorance of what really happened in that country, at that time.

Even the veterans can't agree. Talk to 10 Vietnam veterans and you'll get 10 very different portraits of the war! That's a consequence of war itself, especially for combat veterans.

There are also many myths about the war, and one, in particular, has always had the smell of fiction to it.

Finally, a sociologist in Worcester, MA is helping to put to rest one of the more commonly repeated myths of the war - that anti-war protesters spat at Vietnam veterans.

In a story carried by the Boston Globe in August, Jerry Lembeke extensively researched the infamous tales of spitting. "I'm confident these things didn't happen," Lembeke said.

Lembeke, a Vietnam veteran, began to research the "spitting at veterans" stories during the buildup to the Gulf War, said the Globe story. "I saw this image being invoked by pro-war people to rally opposition to the anti-war side," he said.

Another lie in the War Built on Lies bites the dust.

Sadly, we now know that the architects of that war repeatedly lied to the American people, with bogus enemy body counts and lofty predictions that if we committed even more troops to the cause and bombed the people of North Vietnam "back to the Stone Age", we could drive out the communist menace from the north.

In their arrogance, our leaders ignored the lessons of history and the resilience of the Vietnamese people and sent Americans to fight and die for an empty cause.

Hard to Hear Unspeakable Truths

Letter to the Editor, *The Rutland Herald*, September 12, 1998

I was perplexed by "Vietnam Myths and Phony Vets" (Sept. 3), Dennis Jensen's commentary about sociologist Jerry

Lembeke, who claims that Vietnam Veterans were not spat upon when they returned home from the war. Mr. Lembeke's book, "The Spitting Image," suggests that stories of spitting were implanted by Nixon politicos wanting to drive a wedge between returning vets and anti-war protesters. To back up his theory, Mr. Lembeke cites the lack of photographic evidence of spitters.

Mr. Lembeke has created quite an uproar - especially among veterans who clearly remember being spat upon. A few weeks back, USA Today ran a story about Mr. Lembeke's book. A week later that paper published a brief note from me in which I said that in my two years of conversations with Vietnam veterans (researching "Unspeakable Truths and Happy Endings: Human Cruelty and the New Trauma Therapy," published this year by Sidran) I heard many stories of hitting, spitting, beating and punching. Most veterans I interviewed also told of keeping their medals hidden in closets and refusing to march in patriotic parades to this day, afraid of what bystanders might do. After my note was published, many, many, many veterans contacted me to say "thanks". Not one of the veterans contacting me suggested that I was in error and that Jerry Lembeke was in the clear.

One veteran who contacted me had already called Jerry Lembeke and told him about his own experience "returning from Nam in June of 1965 and being jeered and booed by a band of anti-war demonstrators at Travis Air Force Base." According to this vet, Lembeke "questioned whether such an incident could have actually taken place. He cited some factors he had learned from his research, pointed out that my narrative did not concur with what he understood from his research, and concluded that while I had my own personal recollection, there was no documented evidence of any such incidents ... therefore, the incident I related couldn't have happened."

Apparently it was a calm rather arrogant denial of vividly held memory, and the veteran took it in stride - possibly because he'd been disbelieved so many times before. In my two years of talking to veterans and others survivors of catastrophic experiences, I learned from many that they meet with this sort of denial all of the time. Fear, revulsion, or even a simple failure of the imagination on the part of the listener, renders survivors' truths unbelievable and, eventually, unspeakable.

Our failures as listeners may not be ill intentioned, but their effects are certainly not benign. Survivors of war, Holocaust, street crime, family violence, sexual assault, and political terror told me repeatedly of the sorrow they felt when they braved articulating the horrors they had suffered and friends and family could not listen and believe. Richard Bikales, a survivor of Nazi death camps told me, "Even now it's very hard. Even if they listen, they don't understand. The words aren't there that really describe what's inside me. How do you describe the feelings? How do you describe the events? How do you describe the horror? I don't know."

So while I am astounded by Jerry Lembeke's slick refusal to take vivid, well articulated personal testimony as evidence of truth, I do give him the benefit of the doubt. He is probably not extraordinarily thick headed. I'm inclined to think he's just a regular guy with regular limitations. Many of us have difficulty managing our emotions and integrity when the stories we hear run directly counter to the stories we wish we were hearing.

Rebecca Coffey
Brattleboro

State Committee Chairmen

POW/MIA	Gary Greeno 82 North Elm St. St. Albans, VT 05478
Membership	Richard Doyle 35 Old Terrace St. Bellows Falls, VT 05101 email: rdoyle@pop.det.state.vt.us
Legislative Coordinator	William Cannavan RR #2 Box 61 Pownal, VT 05261 email: cannavan@sover.net
Homeless Coordinator:	Joe LeClair RD #2 Box 1180 Fairfax, VT 05454 email: joe@nutt-in2000.com
VA Voluntary Service Rep:	Chuck Solcom Union Brook Rd. Norfield, VT 05663
Dept. of Emp, Training & Business Opp.	Richard Doyle 35 Old Terrace St. Bellows Falls, VT 05101 email: rdoyle@pop.det.state.vt.us
Public Affairs:	John Miner 134 Beech St. Bennington, VT 05401 email: jminer@vvh.state.vt.us

Friends of Vermont Veterans

The Vet Center - 2 Gilman Office Complex #2
White River Junction, VT 05001
Phone: (802) 295-2908
Fax: (802) 296-3653 or 295-8819

Mission Statement: We "The Friends of Vermont Veterans" pledge to reach out to any veteran of honorable service, peace time or war, active or reserve component, who seeks help.

Focus: The Goal of "Friends of Vermont Veterans" shall focus on helping those veterans in need, and help solve financial or physical stresses that cannot be met by means of mainstream Vet Organizations. Realizing that we all face these same problems: financial, social, physical, and/or emotional hardship; and that this nation's vets have borne more than their share due to the positions in which they were placed, we pledge to assist any vet of honorable service who needs help.

Statement by Sen. James Jeffords On Passage of S. Res. 207

Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Vietnam Veterans of America

submitted by Diana Harrington, Office of James Jeffords

Mr. President:

I was proud to introduce S. Res. 207 on April 2nd of this year, and I am very pleased to mark its passage here tonight.

Tonight's action by the Senate is but one small step to redress the very reason why the founders of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) felt compelled to take action 20 years ago. In 1978, Vietnam Veterans were suffering under the wave of anti-Vietnam sentiment that had swept the nation. Little recognition was given to their sacrifices during the war. And in fact, there was even a great deal of official denial about the extent of the price that had been paid by these veterans, both physical and emotional. For instance, it would be years before Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder was a recognized condition for many veterans and before the Federal Government admitted that our use of Agent Orange had left a terrible legacy of continued suffering for our veterans. The founders of the VVA felt that they needed an organization to speak directly to those needs. The outpouring of enthusiasm from the veterans themselves demonstrated the depth of these feelings.

I am also very proud that Chapter One was founded in my home town of Rutland, Vermont. Vermonters have maintained a prominent voice in the organization, and are active in defining its future direction.

The VVA is not focused just on the three decades behind us. It continues to look to the large challenges ahead both for veterans as a group and Vietnam Veterans in particular. Just as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a permanent reminder of the sacrifices of the past, the VVA will be a continual voice for pragmatism and commitment to the needs of the veteran.

SOLDIERS FREEDOM

**It is the soldier, and not the reporter,
who gave us freedom of the press.**

**It is the soldier, not the poet,
who has given us freedom of speech.**

**It is the soldier, not the campus organizer,
who has given us freedom to demonstrate.**

**It is the soldier, not the lawyer,
who has given us the right to a fair trial.**

**It is the soldier who salutes the flag,
who serves under the flag,
and whose coffin is draped by the flag,
who allows the protestor to burn the flag.**

Author Unknown

Nation's First Vietnam-Era Museum Dedicated in Holmdel, NJ

Reprinted from *The Stars and Stripes*, Oct. 12-25, 1998

The Vietnam Era Educational Center, the country's first museum to document a particularly turbulent period in United States history, was dedicated September 27th at Holmdel, NJ.

New Jersey Gov. Christie Todd Whitman addressed the approximately 200 people attending and Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., a former Vietnam War POW who spent 5 1/2 years as a captive of the North Vietnamese, delivered the keynote address.

"It's important that we remember history by learning about it," Whitman said. "There's no other education center like this that captures the history of that time, both the good and the bad."

'The Full Story'

"New Jersey is now home to the country's only educational center dedicated to telling the full story of the Vietnam War, as seen from the front lines as well as the home front," said New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial foundation President Frank Delaney, a Vietnam veteran.

The \$3.8 million center, largely financed by a donation from Atlantic City casinos in 1995, is described as a companion project of the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial and is located adjacent to it. The two year old memorial bears the names of 1,553 state residents killed or missing in action in Vietnam.

The center houses a collection including photographs, historic timelines, films, interactive displays, personal letters and photographs. Exhibits will reflect political, military, social and cultural perspectives.

Ralph Appelbaum Associates, the New York City design firm known for its work on the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington among other projects, created the facility.

'Fair, Balanced'

Kelly Watts, executive director of the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation, said the center tells a "thought-provoking and fair, balanced story."

The focal point of the center is an immense, mural-like timeline that spans the entire wall of its 5,000 square foot circular exhibition area. The upper half of the wall, concentrating on events in the United States, depicts television stars and celebrities of the period. Pictures of American presidents and the 1969 Woodstock festival are aligned with photos of the pop group the Supremes, the cast from TV's "Star Trek", and Sesame Street's Big Bird.

The timeline, which shows milestones in the war and simultaneous events at home ends with Passages

on its legacy, including post-traumatic stress disorder, the toxic defoliant Agent Orange and the myth of the Vietnam veteran as "a dangerously violent, substance abusing, stressed out failure."

Controversy

Also in the center are a video theater, multipurpose room and a resource center. Interactive presentations, lectures and special programs afford an in-depth study of the Vietnam years.

A three-year controversy over differing views held by veterans and historians preceded the center's creation. The Associated Press reported that an organizing committee spent most of the past year rewriting every word of the facility's text panels and heatedly debating the role of the media, the legitimacy of the antiwar movement and whether the war could have been won.

"We found ourselves between the two extremes, between those who believe that the war was profoundly immoral ... and those who believe that the failure to pursue the war to military victory was evidence of moral failure, that the peace movement sold the nation down the drain," The AP quoted Rutgers University professor Michael Shafer, a committee member, as saying.

Just before the dedication, text on prisoners of war was rewritten to eliminate language that Shafer said suggested a government conspiracy to hide evidence of MIAs and POWs.

Veterans Pleased

Veterans attending the dedication reportedly were pleased with the new facility and said its displays were balanced without being degrading to veterans.

"There was no effort to try and whitewash anything," veteran Anthony Dellanno, who advised the committee, told the AP, adding that veterans "are not going to be embarrassed about taking their children there."

Watts has guided more than 7,000 school age children on tours of the nearby Vietnam memorial.

"We expect that by adding a visit to the Educational Center, students will gain an even deeper understanding of the era and the ultimate sacrifice made by the more than 1,500 men and women who served in the Vietnam War and never returned home," she said.

New Chapter

Henry Rossi, president of the Friends of the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, said school children leave the memorial hungry for more information.

Visits to the memorial open "a new chapter in the lives of many of these young people who have not personally been affected by war or have not studied the era in school," he said. "We believe that after a tour of the memorial and an in-depth look into the era these students will still have some lingering questions, but will leave feeling a bit more satisfied."

FROM THE OTHER SIDE

Part 3

I see my wife's courage building as she sees Momma touch the Wall and she approaches and lays her hand on my waiting hand. All the emotions, feelings and memories of three decades past flash between our touch and I tell her that it's alright. Carry on with your life and don't worry about me.....I can see as I look into her eyes that she hears and understands me and a big burden has been lifted from her. I watch as they lay flowers and other memories of my past. My lucky charm that was taken from me and sent to her by my CO, a tattered and worn teddy bear that I can barely remember having as I grew up as a child and several medals that I had earned and were presented to my wife. One of them is the Combat Infantry Badge that I am very proud of and I notice that my son is also wearing this medal. I had earned mine in the jungles of Vietnam and he had probably earned his in the deserts of Iraq. I can tell that they are preparing to leave and I try to take a mental picture of them together, because I don't know when I will see them again. I wouldn't blame them if they were not to return and can only thank them that I was not forgotten. My wife and Momma near the Wall for one final touch and so many years of indecision, fear and sorrow are let go. As they turn to leave I feel my tears that had not flowed for so many years, form as if dew drops on the other side of the Wall.

to be continued

January Meeting Info

The January meeting of VVA #1

will be held on

SATURDAY, JANUARY 9, 1999

at 5:00 p.m. It will be held at

13 CENTER STREET, which is the

location of John's store.

DOWNTOWN HAS SOLE SHOE REPAIR.

For Directions CALL 773-2815.

On The Lighter Side

Words to Live by for any aviator

Hovering is for pilots who love to fly, but have no place to go.

A good landing is one which you can walk away from. A great landing is one which lets you use the plane another time.

Good judgement comes from experience. Good experience comes from someone else's bad judgement.

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter One

P.O. Box 6301

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Please Forward



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"Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #1 will assist Vietnam Era Veterans, their families & others in the enhancement of their life experience through intervention and social interaction."